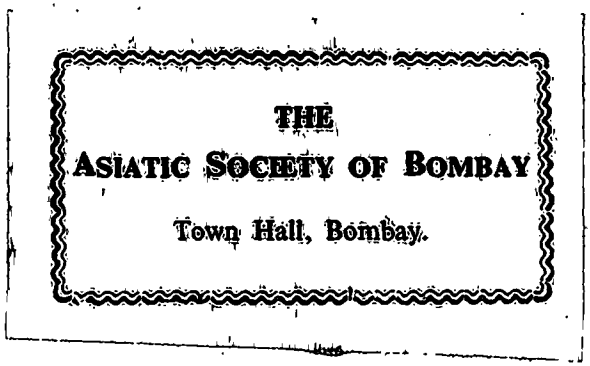
00066837

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE AND VERSION

OF

THE NEW TESTAMENT;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

BY

PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D.D.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. V

66837

CONTAINING THE

EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE

GALATIANS,
EPHESIANS,
PHILIPPIANS,
COLOSSIANS,
I. THESSALONIANS,
II. THESSALONIANS,
I. TIMOTHY,
II. TIMOTHY,
TITUS,
PHILEMON.

TENTH EDITION—CAREFULLY CORRECTED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY ANDREW KIPPIS, D.D. F.R.S. AND S.A.

Ama Scripturas sanctas, & amabit te sapientia.

HIERON.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON; W. OTRIDGE AND SON; J. WALKER; DARTON AND HARVEY; J. NUNN; C. LAW; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND CO.; VERNOR, HOOD, AND CO.; J. CUTHELL; LACKINGTON AND CO.; J. MAWMAN; MATHEWS AND LEIGH; J. HATCHERD; R. SCHOLEY; J. RICHARDSON; J. FAULDER; W. POPLE; CROSBY AND CO.; CADELL AND DAVIES; AND JOHNSON AND CO.

1811.

2271
B26/Fam
66837

J. G. Barnard, Printer, Skinner Street, London.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

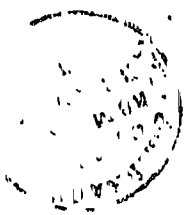
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

GALATIANS.

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE churches of Galatia, which was a province of the Lesser Asia, were first converted to the Christian faith by the apostle Paul, about the latter end of the year 50, when passing through the region of Galatia, he was received with great affection, and made the instrument of planting several churches there; which, when he visited those parts again, in his next progress in the year 54, he had an opportunity of confirming in the doctrine that he before had taught them. (Compare Acts xvi. 6; xviii. 23; and Gal. iv. 13—15.)

From the contents of this epistle it appears, that after he had preached the gospel to the Galatians, some judaizing zealots had endeavoured to degrade the character of St. Paul among them, as one not immediately commissioned by Christ, as the other apostles were, and to subvert his doctrine in the grand article of justification, by insisting on the observation of the Jewish ceremonies, and so attempting to incorporate the law with Christianity. And as St. Paul expresses here to the Galatians his concern and wonder that they were so soon perverted from the doctrine he had preached, (chap. i. 6.) he therefore must have written this epistle not long after he had been among them; and as no hint is given through the whole of it, that he had been with

them more than once, it is most reasonable to conclude, that it was written before his second journey to Galatia, and consequently not later than the year of our Lord 53, which was the 13th of the emperor Claudian. (See Vol. III. sect. 41. note[l].)

And though by the subscription, which is commonly placed at the end of it, this epistle is said to be written from Rome, yet if the latest date which some have given it should be allowed, which fixes it to the year 58, this could not be the place from whence it was written, as St. Paul then had never been at Rome, and none suppose him to have come there till after the year 60; which manifestly shews that the subscription ought to be rejected as a spurious addition, though it has been the means of leading many into a palpable mistake. (See Vol. III. sect. 44, note[a].) But dating it as above, in the year 53, it appears to be written from Corinth, where the apostle had sufficient time to write it (as he did) with his own hand, as he continued in that city near two years. Compare Acts xviii. 3, 11.

The principal design of the apostle Paul in this epistle, was "to assert and vindicate his apostolical authority and doctrine, and to establish and confirm the churches of Galatia in the faith of Christ, especially with respect to the important point of justification; to expose the errors that were introduced among them; and to revive those principles of Christianity that he had taught them when he first preached the gospel to them." And to this purpose,

FIRST, He begins with an address adapted to his main design, in which he asserts his own apostleship, and hints at the provision made for our justification by Christ, expressing at the same time his most affectionate regard for the Galatian churches; (chap. i. 1—5.) And then,

SECONDLY, He enters upon what he principally had in view,—to vindicate the authority of his doctrine and mission,—to prove that justification only can be had by faith in Christ, without the works of the law,—and to expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly,

in hearkening to false teachers, and being persuaded by them to become subject to the law. Where,

I. In vindication of the authority of his doctrine and mission,—after declaring his astonishment that the Galatians had so soon been led aside, under the influence of seducing teachers, from the simplicity of that gospel he had preached among them with the greatest faithfulness (ver. 6—10.) he shews them,

1. That he received his mission and his doctrine, not from men, but by immediate revelation from Christ himself, who, when he was a persecuting zealot for the law, had called him by his grace to preach the gospel; in which he had immediately engaged without consulting any man, or making any application to the other apostles for instruction in his work, or for authority to perform it, (ver. 11, to the end.)

2. That in this interview with the apostles at Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, he had maintained the liberty of Christians from the yoke of the law; and having communicated to the chief of them, an account of his ministry, they were so far from disapproving either his doctrine or his practice, that they acknowledged the authority of his mission; and cordially embracing him as a brother apostle, encouraged him to prosecute the work he was engaged in, and to continue preaching to the Gentiles; (chap. ii. 1—10.) To which he adds,

3. That however some had represented him as inferior to the other apostles, and as a favourer of the ceremonial law, he had given sufficient proof of the contrary; in that when Peter came to Antioch, the character of that apostle did not prevent his openly reproving him, for withdrawing from the conversation of the Gentile converts for fear of displeasing the Jews, and undermining by this means the liberty of the Christian church from Jewish impositions; expostulating with him, how very inconsistent and absurd it was, that when they who were Jews had thought it necessary, from a full conviction of the insufficiency of the law to justify them, to embrace the gospel, and to believe in Christ

for justification, they shall endeavour after this to bring the Gentiles into subjection to the law, as if the dispensation introduced by Christ would leave them under sin without it. He was determined for his own part, that no such inconsistency should be found either in his doctrine or his practice; and, having renounced all expectations from the law, his whole dependence was upon Christ alone for righteousness and life, (ver. 11, to the end.) Having thus entered on the main point he had in view, the apostle proceeds,

II. To prove, that justification only can be had by faith in Christ without the works of the law. And this he introduces, with reproving the Galatians for their instability with regard to this important doctrine; which having been established by the death of Christ, and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, nothing could be more senseless than to turn from it to the carnal ordinances of the law, and so to lose the benefit of all their sufferings for the gospel, unmindful of the attestations that were given to the truth of it; (chap. iii. 1—5.)[d] And then, in confirmation of the doctrine he had reproved them for rejecting, he offers several arguments, and shews,

1. That as it was by faith Abraham was justified, so it is by faith that we become his children, and are partakers of the blessing with him: (ver. 6—9.)

2. That the law pronounces a curse on every one who is in any instance guilty of transgressing it; and therefore, that it is not by the law we can be justified, but by faith; (ver. 10—12.)

3. That Christ hath set us free from the condemning sentence of the law; and as it is by him that we escape the curse, so we obtain the blessing only through faith in him; (ver. 13, 14.)

4. That the stability of the covenant of promise to Abraham and his seed is such, that it could not be vacated by the law, which was given long after the promise was made, under the mediation of Moses, and between different parties; and therefore, that it is not by the observance of the law, but only by faith in

the promise, the benefit of justification and a title to eternal life can be obtained; (ver. 15—18.)

5. That the design of God in giving the law was, not to justify, but to convince of sin, as well as to restrain from the commission of it; and being intended only for a temporary institution, instead of vacating the promise, it was designed to be subservient to it, by shewing the necessity of a better righteousness than that of the law, and so to lead the weakened soul to Christ, that, being justified by faith in him, we might obtain the benefit of the promise; (ver. 19—24.) And therefore,

6. That such is the advantage of the gospel-dispensation, that Christians are no longer under the discipline of the law; but being united unto Christ by faith, and so become the sons of God, both Jews and Gentiles are all one in him; and the distinctions which the law had made being done away, all true believers are the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the blessing with him, by virtue of the promise, and not by any title which the law could give; (ver. 25, to the end.)—But as the heir to an estate is in subjection, like a servant, under the government of guardians, during his minority; so were the Jews, before the gospel was revealed, like children under age, kept in subjection to the law; till at the time appointed for their entering on possession of the promised inheritance, as sons that were come to maturity, Christ was sent forth to answer all that the law demanded, and to redeem his people from their bondage to it; that being received by faith in him into the number of the sons of God, both Jews and Gentiles might be brought into a glorious liberty, and, being enabled by the Spirit to approach to God as their Father, they might enjoy the privilege and freedom of heirs of God through Christ, and be no more as servants under subjection to the law; (chap. iv. 1—7.) And hence the apostle takes occasion,

III. To expostulate with the Galatians on their weakness and folly in being so deluded by false teachers, as to give up the liberty of the gospel, and be persuaded to become subject to the law. And, to convince them how unreasonable and absurd their conduct was,

1. He observes, that they were formerly, as Gentiles, in bondage to the superstitions of the heathen worship, and now, that they were brought into a state of liberty, it was a strange infatuation they should be willing to submit again to another servitude, and to come under bondage to the unprofitable rites and ceremonies of the law; which gave him ground to fear his labour would be found in a great measure to have been lost upon them; (ver. 8—11.)

2. He reminds them of the great affection and regard they had expressed for him and his ministry when he first preached the gospel to them; and argues with them, what occasion he had given for the alteration of their disposition towards him, or how they could account for it, unless he was become their enemy by telling them the truth; (ver 12—16.)

3. He cautions them against the base design of their false teachers, who would alienate their hearts from him, to engross them to themselves; and intimates how fit it was they should retain the same regard to him and to the truth, now he was absent, as they had shewn when he was present; assuring them that he had still the same affectionate concern for them, and would be glad of coming to them, and finding matters better with them than he feared; (ver. 17—20.)

4. He illustrates the advantage of believers under the gospel, as to their privilege and freedom, above that of those under the law, by an allegory taken from the two sons of Abraham by Hagar and Sarah, as typical of the difference between the two dispensations of the law and gospel; of which the former was a state of bondage, and all that seek for justification by it are excluded like Ishmael from inheriting the promise; whereas the latter is a state of freedom, and those who come into this new and better dispensation, like Isaac, are the children of the promise, and are by faith entitled to the blessings of it; (ver. 21, to the end.)—This was the freedom they were brought into by Christ; and he exhorts them to be stedfast in it, and to beware of coming under a servile yoke by a subjection to the law; (chap. v. 1.) And, to prevent their having any further thought of it,

5. He assures them, that by submitting to be circumcised, they became subject to the whole burden of the law, and could receive no benefit by Christ, but were cut off from all advantage they might have by the grace of the gospel, by seeking to be justified by their obedience to the law; while he and all true Christians looked for justification only by the righteousness of Christ, with reference to which it made no difference whether they were circumcised or not, if they had such a faith as operates by love; (ver. 2—6.) And therefore,

6. He calls them to consider whence it was that, after they had set out well, they were drawn off from that regard which they once had for the truth and liberty of the gospel; and shews them it was owing to the ill impression made upon them by their false teachers, by whom he was unjustly charged with preaching up circumcision, of which his sufferings for the doctrine of the cross were a plain confutation; expressing at the same time his hope concerning them, that they would come to be of the same mind with him, and wishing those who had endeavoured to corrupt them were cast out of the church, that they might do no further mischief, (ver. 7—12.)—And now, as he was drawing to a close of his epistle, according to his usual method,

THIRDLY, He offers several practical directions to them, and exhorts them to a behaviour answerable to their Christian calling, and to the institution of the gospel, as a doctrine according to godliness. Where,

1. He takes occasion from his mentioning their Christian liberty to caution them against abusing it to an indulgence of the flesh, and to the breach of Christian charity; and urges them to mutual love, as what they were obliged to both by the law and gospel, and which if they neglected, and gave way to animosities and contentions, they would be exposed to ruin and destruction; (ver. 13—15.)

2. He exhorts them to a conversation suitable to the dispensation of grace they had received, by a compliance with the influences of the Spirit, in opposition to the workings of the flesh; and, giving a description of the different fruits of each, shews, that as Christians

they were obliged to crucify the flesh with its corrupt affections, and to obey the dictates of the Spirit, in a continual exercise of all the graces of it; and warns them, in particular, against pride and vain glory: (ver. 16, to the end.)

3. He recommends it to them to deal tenderly with those who are overtaken in a fault, endeavouring to restore them, with a compassionate regard to their infirmities, by a meek and gentle treatment, as those who would fulfil the law of Christ: and cautions them, instead of entertaining a conceited notion of their own sufficiency, as if they were not liable to fall as well as others, or being pleased with the high sentiments that others have of them, to examine their own work, whether it be such as may afford them ground of rejoicing, since every one must be accountable for his own behaviour, and shall at last be dealt with, not according to the vain imagination he has of himself, or the good opinion of others concerning him, but according to what he really is, and the true character that he is found to bear; (chap. vi. 1—5.)

4. He presses it upon them as their duty, to be free and liberal in contributing to the support and maintenance of their ministers, assuring them that plausible excuses in a point of duty would fatally deceive those that made use of them, and every one should reap according as he sowed; and therefore urges them not to be weary in well-doing, but to lay hold of every opportunity for doing good to all, especially to their fellow Christians; (ver. 6—10.)

And now, the apostle having written this epistle with his own hand, and given this testimony of his affectionate regard to the Galatians, sums up the main design of it as the close of all (ver. 11, to the end,) and shews,—that as to their false teachers it was for selfish ends, and not from any veneration for the law, they pressed them to be circumcised, that by this means they might keep up their reputation with the Jews, and might not only save themselves from persecution, but glory also in the number of their proselytes;—while, for his own part, he had no worldly views, and would not glory

but in the cross of Christ, by whom alone it is that justification can be had. This was the doctrine that he preached, nor should the fear of persecution make him to disguise it, for it was only in this way that any could be justified and saved; and, whether they were circumcised or not, if they were made new creatures, and acted by this principle, mercy and peace should be upon them, as the true Israel of God. No one should therefore trouble him any more with urging the necessity of circumcision, or with suggesting he himself was for it, when he had shewn his zeal for the pure doctrine of the gospel by his sufferings for it; the marks of which were a plain evidence of his regard to Christ, and such a proof of his sincerity, as might well serve to vindicate his character, and to confirm the truth of what he had taught them.—And, having thus reminded them of the main view he had in writing this epistle, he concludes it with a solemn apostolical benediction.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE GALATIANS.

SECT. I.

The apostle Paul, after a general and proper salutation, expresses his surprise and concern, that the Galatian Christians had so soon suffered themselves to be led aside from the simplicity of that gospel which he had first planted amongst them. Gal. I. 1—10.

GALATIANS I. 1.

GAL. I. 1. PAUL an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God

YOU receive this epistle from *Paul*, who hath the honour to stand in the character of *an apostle* of the Christian church; an important office which he did *not* presumptuously arrogate to himself, nor receive *from* the appointment or authority of *men*, as the original, *nor by* the choice or intervention of any *man* upon earth, as the instrument of his mission; whatever the factious teachers, who are endeavouring to disturb you, may have represented: *but* I am capable of giving you the most convincing evidence, that I had an immediate call to this most honourable charge *by Jesus Christ* the great Head of the church, who did himself in person appear to me again and again, (Acts ix. 4; xxii 18,) *and* sent me forth to be his witness unto all men, according to the sovereign choice of *God the Father*,

SECT. 1. Gal. I. 1.

SECT. I. Gal. I. 1.

(Acts xxii. 14, 15,) *who hath raised him from* among *the dead*,[a] and therein laid the great foundation of our faith in him for righteousness and life, and our reliance on him as the Son of God and the only Saviour of men.

the Father who raised him from the dead;)

2 *And* while I am thus addressing myself to you, *all the* Christian *brethren*, especially the ministers[b] *who are with me* here at Corinth, join with me in the sentiments I am going to propose, and in the most friendly and affectionate salutations *unto the churches of Galatia*, whom they cordially love, notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion which at present may subsist among them.[c]

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia;

3 It is our most unfeigned ardent prayer, that the richest communications of Divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] imparted *to you*, with all the blessings of prosperity *and peace* of every kind *from God the father*, the great original and fountain of all good, *and* [*from*] *our Lord Jesus Christ*, the purchaser and dispenser of it;

3 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 *Who* graciously and compassionately *gave himself* up to the severest sufferings as an atoning sacrifice *for our sins, that he might* thus *deliver us* by the efficacy of his death *from* the destructive snares and condemnation that attend *this present evil world*,[d] from the

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present

[a] *Who hath raised him from the dead.*] Mr. L'Enfant thinks these words are added to obviate an objection which might be raised against Paul's mission, from his not having received a commission from Christ, like the other apostles, while he was here on earth.—But the minds of the apostles appear to be always full of the joyful idea of *Christ's resurrection*, and therefore it is no wonder that out of the fulness of their hearts they should seize every opportunity of speaking of it. Compare Rom. i. 4; 1 Thess. i. 10; Heb. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3; and a multitude of other texts.—To which it may be added, that it is with great propriety the apostle mentions here, that *God hath raised him from the dead*, as agreeable to the main point he had in view, which was to assert the doctrine of *justification by faith in Christ*; since God declared, by *raising him from the dead*, that he accepted the atonement Christ had made, and gave him a discharge from any further claim upon him for the satisfaction of his justice; and as it is this, that is the great foundation of our *faith in Christ*, so the apostle says, elsewhere, that he *was raised again for our justification*; Rom. iv. 25.

[b] *The brethren*, especially the ministers.] As the titles of *brethren* and *saints* are applied to different persons, and *ministers* seem to be distinguished by being called *brethren*, Phil. iv. 21, 22, they are probably here intended.

[c] Notwithstanding any difference in form and opinion, &c.] Though the Christians at Corinth were most of them *converted Gentiles*, and these of Galatia were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Jewish ceremonies; yet the apostle expresses their *affection* towards these their brethren, and that with great propriety, that he might thereby invite them to a suitable return of love. On the same principle he reminds them (ver. 4,) of the blessings which as Christians they shared in common, that he might endear them the more to those who were joined with them in such happy bands.

[d] *From this present evil world.*] The words ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος αἰῶνος πονηροῦ are am-

evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

predominant vices of the age, and from the ruin they will bring on all who shall continue in the practice of them, whether Jews or Gentiles, which glorious design he generously undertook *according to the* merciful and saving *will of God, even our Father*, who chose this wisest and happiest method of recovering us to himself: *To whom* therefore, for this adorable and matchless grace to sinful creatures, [*be*] *glory* and praise *for ever and ever. Amen.* SECT. 1. Gal. I. 4. 5

5 To whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

6 I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel:

Since this then is the only way of being justified and saved, it gives me great concern, and *I am* quite *astonished*, my beloved brethren, *that* after ye have been instructed in it, and seemed to have received the truth in the love of it, *ye are so soon removed*[e] *from* a due regard to *him that called you* into this method of salvation *by* and through *the grace of Christ*,[f] and who continues still in the same sentiments as when he was at first the happy instrument of bringing you to an acquaintance with it; that ye are so soon removed, I say, *unto* what may almost be called *another gospel*,[g] as being so entirely inconsistent with the very fundamentals of that which you were originally 6

biguous, and some would render them, *from the evil of this present world*; which makes a very good sense; but had it been intended by the apostle, I think the article τῳ would have been repeated. (Compare John xvii. 15.)—Mr. Locke argues from 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8, that αιων ουτος signifies the Jewish nation under the Mosaic constitution; and supposes these words to contain an intimation, that God intended to take the Jews themselves out of it, so far was he from any purpose of bringing the Gentiles under it. But as it is certain that αιων often signifies the same with κοσμος, that is, *the world*, (see Mat. xiii. 39, 40; 2 Cor. iv. 4; and Tit. ii. 12; which last place seems exactly parallel to this) I think it would be very unreasonable to limit so noble and expressive a clause by so narrow an interpretation.

[e] *That ye are so soon removed.*] It appears from the beginning of the general introduction to this epistle, that Paul had preached the gospel first to the Galatians, and planted several churches in that country, in his passing through it (Acts xvi. 6.) about the latter end of the year 50. He visited them again (Acts xviii. 23.) in the year 54; and he seems to have written this epistle before that visit. He had reason therefore to wonder that their sentiments were *so quickly* changed, and that such warm affections as they then bore him (chap. iv. 14, 15.) were *so soon* and so greatly alienated.

[f] *From him that called you by the grace of Christ.*] If it be here considered that the expression in the original is εν χαριτι, that, is, *by* or *through the grace of Christ*, (as our translation renders it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Thess. ii. 16) and not *into the grace*; there is no difficulty in admitting that the apostle Paul points out *himself* by him *that called them* (as he may likewise afterwards, chap. v. 8.) nor is there any thing more assuming in it than in his speaking of *himself* as *he that ministered the Spirit to them*. Chap. iii. 5.

[g] *Unto another gospel.*] Mons. Saurin observes (Serm. Vol. XI. p. 46.) that the Galatians were a colony of the Gauls, that is, of the ancient inhabitants of France; who, says he, have been always reproached with taking impressions easily, and as easily suffering them to be effaced.

SECT. 1. taught concerning our free justification by Divine grace on our believing, without the works of the Mosaic law. But indeed, to speak more exactly, that system of doctrines *which* you have so rashly and unhappily received, *is not* in strict propriety *another* gospel, nor worthy the name of gospel at all: *but* this in short is the case, that *there are some* seducing and Pharisaical teachers, *who*, for their own unworthy ends, have gone about to *trouble you* with false insinuations, and *are desirous* to do their utmost *to subvert* and overthrow *the gospel of Christ*, which hath been preached to you in so pure and powerful a manner. You know the doctrine that was first delivered to you under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and whatsoever may have been suggested, as if Peter and the other apostles, and even I myself, do sometimes preach up the works of the law, as necessary to be joined with faith in Christ for justification, let no such principles be admitted by you: *but though we*, or any other apostle, not excepting the most honourable and illustrious names, *or* even *an angel from heaven*,[h] if that were possible, should *preach any other gospel among you than that which we have* already *preached unto you*, and confirmed by such apparent and uncontrouled miracles, *let him* not only *be* rejected, but pronounced an *anathema*, and be devoted to a perpetual and most dreadful curse.

Gal. I. 7.

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 Nor is it by any sudden flight of zeal that I express myself thus; but *as we have said* but just *before, so say I now again*, and solemnly repeat it as my deliberate judgment, *If any one*, whatever, whether man or angel, *preach any other gospel to you than that which ye have received* already from our lips, and which indeed ye have been taught by us from Christ himself, *let him be anathema*, and look upon him with as much detestation as you would on the most execrable creature in the universe.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10 I speak with all this freedom from the sure

10 For do I now

[h] *Or an angel from heaven.*] Some have imagined that the apostle here refers to the pretences which Cerinthus is said to have made to his receiving a revelation from the hand of *an angel*; but I see no proof that this pretension was made *so early*, if indeed it were made at all.

persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

consciousness of my own integrity: *for* after all that I have done and suffered for the truth, *do I now solicit the favour of men, or of God*[i]? Do I endeavour in my ministry to ingratiate myself with men, or to approve myself to God? *Or do I*, in the general course of my conduct, *seek to please men* by a compliance with their prejudices or designs? I have no party-views, as I had formerly before I was converted (Acts ix. 1, 2), nor any intention to pursue the schemes and serve the purposes of men; for *if indeed*[k] *I yet pleased men*, by soothing their humour and flattering their vanity, *I should not be the servant of Christ*; I should not deserve the name of a Christian, and much less that of a minister and an apostle, and must indeed change the whole system of my doctrine, if I would render it agreeable to human prejudices.

SECT. I. Gal. I. 10.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us adore the name of that blessed Redeemer who gave himself a sacrifice for our sins: and may the consideration of his gracious purpose in doing it have its efficacy, *to deliver us from this present evil world*, and to raise our hearts to that to which the Father hath exalted him, by whom he was raised from the dead: to whom, for all the purposes of his grace in the whole scheme of our redemption, be glory for ever and ever. Verse 4. 5

Let the remembrance of this compassionate Saviour, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, engage us to be stedfast in the profession of his religion, and to be upon our guard against all who would pervert the gospel. May his ministers especially be exceeding cautious how they do any thing that looks like corrupting it; since such a dreadful anathema is pronounced against an apostle, or an angel, who should attempt it! 8, 9

Who can be superior to every alarm on this head that considers the case of the Galatians, who, though they received the gospel from the lips of such an apostle as Paul, could be so soon removed, and drawn aside to a quite different system? But God made a gracious provision for their being recovered, and confirmed in the primitive faith, by this epistle; which was intend- 6

[i] *Solicit the favour of men, or of God?*] Ἀνθρώπους πείθω, ἢ τὸν Θεόν; It is by a great latitude that the Prussian version renders this, "The doctrine which I would "here persuade, is it that of men or of "God?" The connection seems to demonstrate that πείθω here signifies, *seek to persuade or to ingratiate himself with* the one or the other, though it be acknowledged to be a less common sense. Compare Acts xii. 20; xiv. 19; xix. 26.

[k] *Indeed.*] That γὰρ is often used to signify *indeed*, see note [l] on Acts xix. 40, Vol. III. p. 293.

SECT. I. ed also to be a security to us, that we might learn from hence the purity and simplicity of the Christian doctrine, and be established in *the truth as it is in Jesus.*

Ver. 10. Let the ministers of Christ faithfully preach it, *not as seeking to please men*, but that God who trieth the hearts; and who can only be pleased by an entire surrender of the soul to that system of truth and duty which he hath condescended to teach, and by a faithful care to spread its genuine and salutary maxims as widely as they can, without any addition or diminution. To solicit the favour of men, and to endeavour to oblige them, by sacrificing such sacred considerations to any of their prejudices and follies is to act in a manner utterly unbecoming a servant of Christ; and so unworthy a conduct in such as bear the character of ministers, may justly provoke the indignation of their Divine Master to make them as contemptible as they suffer themselves to become unfaithful.

SECT. II.

To vindicate his doctrine to the Galatians, and to remove the prejudices that were raised against it, Paul shews them it was not received from men; and, as a proof of the Divine authority of his mission, gives some account of facts which immediately succeeded his conversion from a persecuting zeal against Christianity to the profession of it. Gal. I. 11. *to the end.*

GALATIANS I. 11.

SECT. II. SOME have indeed attempted to reflect upon my doctrine, and to depreciate the authority of my commission as an apostle; *but I certify you, brethren*, and declare in the most determinate language I am capable of using, *that* whatever my enemies, who herein are yours likewise, may insinuate to the contrary, *the gospel which has* every where *been preached by me, is not according to* the tradition or invention of *man*, nor in any way adulterated and debased to suit the relish, or to favour the prejudices, of those to whom it was to be delivered.

Gal. I. 11.

12 *For I neither received* my commission to preach *it from* the authority or interposition of any *man* whatever, *nor was I taught* [*it*] by any written memoirs, or any other human method of instruction[a]; *but* in a most

GAL. I. 11. BUT I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught

[a] *Nor was I taught it*, &c.] If it should be objected here, that Ananias would undoubtedly instruct Paul in the principles of the gospel before he bap-

it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

extraordinary and miraculous way I was enlightened in it, and authorized to preach it, *by the* immediate *revelation of Jesus Christ* himself, who communicated to me by inspiration the knowledge of salvation by faith in him, and sent me forth to publish the glad tidings of the gospel. SECT. II. Gal. I. 12

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews' religion, *how* that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

This you already know, though I touch upon it again as a truth of so great importance; *for you* undoubtedly *have heard of my conversation* and character *in time past*, particularly in my youthful days, and to the happy time when I became acquainted with the gospel; that I was such a violent bigot *in* the profession of *Judaism*,[b] and so implacable an enemy to the followers of Christ, *that I unmeasurably persecuted* with the most insatiable rage *the church of God*, which I now esteem it my greatest honour to edify and serve, though I was then intent upon its ruin, *and ravaged it*, with all the fury of a beast of prey. 13

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

And such was my regard for all the Jewish rites and customs, that *I made proficiency in* the knowledge and practice of *Judaism, beyond many of my own nation*, [*who were*] *my equals* in age, and of the same standing with myself in the study of the law; *being more abundantly* and passionately *zealous for the* hereditary maxims and *traditions of my fathers*, on which the Pharisaic sect lays so much stress. 14

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

But when at length *it pleased God, who* in the secret purposes of his mercy had set apart and *separated me* to this office *from my mother's womb*, (as he did Jeremiah to that of a prophet, Jer. i. 5,) having determined to employ me as a minister of his gospel; *and* who afterwards *called* [*me*] *by* such an astonishing display and energy of *his grace*, while I was ac- 15

tized him, it may be replied, not only that Ananias was no such considerable person that Paul should be suspected by the Galatians to have been modelled by him; but that it seems, when Ananias first came to him, Paul was so well acquainted with the principles of Christianity, which he had been instructed in by revelation during the three days of his blindness, that Ananias could not judge it necessary to instruct him as a catechumen; which is the more probable, as it appears the Lord had told him Paul was before acquainted by a vision with the purpose of his coming to him. See Acts ix. 12.

[b] *In Judaism.*] Mr. L'Enfant well observes, that this does not signify the religion originally taught by Moses, but that which was practised among the Jews at this time, and much of it built upon the traditions of the elders.

SECT. II.

tually engaged in opposition to his cause and interest; When it pleased him, I say, *to reveal* by vision and inspiration *his Son* Christ Jesus *in me*, and thus to give me a discovery of the glories of his person, and of his righteousness and grace, *that I might* not only know him for my own salvation, but also in due time, when Providence should open a convenient way, might *preach him among the Gentiles*,[c] as well as among the Jews, to whom my addresses were at first confined; *immediately* my heart was overpowered, and all my prejudices so entirely removed, that *I conferred not with flesh and blood*,[d] and stood not to consider what would be most subservient to my worldly interest, or to consult with any mortal man about engaging in the work to which I had so clear a call. *Nor did I* at that time *go up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me*, to be instructed more particularly in the doctrines I should preach, that there might be no inconsistencies between us, or to apply to them for a commission to perform my office: *but*, having entered on my ministry, and preached the word

Gal. 1. 16

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which are apostles before me;

[c] *That I might preach him among the Gentiles.*] This was undoubtedly the scheme of Providence concerning Paul, who was accordingly distinguished by the character of the apostle of the Gentiles; but if his conversion happened, as we suppose, about the year 35, and Peter's preaching to Cornelius in the year 39, then, since it is incontestably evident that the Gentiles first heard the gospel by the mouth of Peter, it would follow that Paul did not at first understand the full extent of his commission, and therefore, when he first began to preach, confined his labours to the synagogues at Damascus, which is indeed intimated, Acts ix. 20—22.

[d] *Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*] Dr. Wells and some others understand this as if the apostle had said, "*Immediately* after the recovery of my "sight, without conferring with any "man in the world, or so much as applying to Ananias himself for advice, I "retired by Divine direction into the desert of Arabia; where, after some time "spent in devotion, I had *a full revelation* made to me of the most important "facts and doctrines of Christianity, "[which some suppose to be *the rapture* "referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 3,] and then, "after my return from thence, preached "at Damascus for the first time." (See Wells' Geog. Vol. III. p. 275.) And Mr. Locke insists that εὐθέως here does not refer to his *immediately* engaging in the work of the ministry without applying for advice to any man, but to his going into Arabia.—But the same word is used by Luke in his history of the Acts, who, without taking any notice of Paul's departure into Arabia, says, that after he recovered strength, he tarried certain days at Damascus, and (εὐθέως) *immediately preached Christ* in the synagogues. Acts ix. 19, 20. So that it seems most probable to me, that, after his conversion, Paul was so well instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by the *revelation* that was then made to him, that he *immediately* began, without consulting any man, to preach the word at Damascus, before he went from thence into Arabia; which is most suitable to the natural order of the words, and best agrees with the account of his first entering on his ministry in the Acts. See Vol. III. sect. xx. note.[h]

but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

at Damascus, (Acts ix. 20,) *I went* for a while *into Arabia*, where I could have no opportunity of being taught by any man, as none of the apostles had been there before me; *and* from thence I *returned again to Damascus*, where I boldly declared the necessity of believing in Christ for salvation, even in the presence of those Jews whom I knew to be most strongly prejudiced against that important doctrine. SECT. II. Gal. i. 17.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

Then at length, *after three years* from the time of my conversion, *I went up to Jerusalem to visit* and converse with *Peter*, by whom, when he had heard from Barnabas an account of my conversion and my preaching at Damascus, I was cordially received as one whom the Lord had called: *and I abode* there *with him* at his house but *fifteen days*, to have the pleasure of discoursing with him on the mutual success of our ministry, and not with the least view of receiving any farther authority from him. 18

19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

But I saw no one of the apostles then *besides*, *except* it were *James, the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus[e]; for all the rest of that sacred society were absent at that time on their respective missions. 19

20 Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Now with respect to all these circumstances, [*as to*] *the things which I write unto you*, you may give the most entire credit to them, how little soever they may consist with some reports that have been artfully spread abroad concerning me; for *behold*, I solemnly profess to you *before God*, that *I do not lie* or falsify in the least degree[f], but with all possi- 20

[e] *James the brother* or near kinsman *of the Lord* Jesus.] He was the son of Alpheus and Mary, the sister of the *virgin*; so that James was cousin-german to Jesus. See Vol. II. sect. clxxiv. note [e], p. 441.—This visit to Jerusalem (which is mentioned Acts ix. 26, & seq.) as it was three years after his conversion, appears to have been in the year 38; and, after Paul had preached so long before, it cannot be supposed he was instructed how to preach the gospel in the short stay he now made at Jerusalem, where he saw only two of the apostles.

[f] *Before God, I do not lie.*] A revelation of the facts and doctrines of Christianity immediately from Jesus Christ himself, without the assistance of any human teacher, so wonderfully agreeing in all its branches with that which Christ had taught on earth both before and after his resurrection, was so extraordinary an event, and of so great importance to those whom St. Paul visited and to whom he wrote, that one cannot wonder he should think it proper to assert it in so solemn a manner. We have great reason, while we read the attestation he has given to the truth of what he says, to acknowledge that it is of a piece with the many signs and wonders attending both his conversion and his ministry; which Mr. Lyttleton has so admirably illustrated in his Observations on the Conversion, &c. of St. Paul.

SECT. II.

ble frankness and sincerity speak what I assuredly know to be the most certain truth.

Gal. 1. 21. *Afterwards* departing from Jerusalem, *I came into the regions of Syria; and* from thence I passed into my native country of *Cilicia*, to exercise my ministry there, and to bring, if possible, those among whom I was born, to the knowledge of Christ and of the doctrine of

22 salvation by him. *And* during all this time, as I had only just passed through their country in my way, *I was unknown by face to the* several *churches of Christ which were in Judea*, as well as to the greater part of my brethren the apostles: so that I could learn nothing of the contents of the gospel from any of them:

23 *But only they had heard* this wonderful account in general, which might well spread through all the land, *that he who* so cruelly *persecuted us in times past* to imprisonment and death, was become a convert to the victorious truth and grace of the gospel, so that he *now preached the* same Divine *faith which he formerly ravaged* and laid waste to the utmost of his power, and would, if possible, have to-

24 tally destroyed and extirpated: *And they glorified God on my account*, as they well might, beholding in me so illustrious an instance of the power and sovereignty of his grace.

21 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;

22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ.

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

24 And they glorified God in me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 24. LET us also, at this distance of time and country, join with them in glorifying God in the apostle; in adoring the grace

23 that engaged him to *preach the faith he would once have destroyed*, and at length to add *his own blood* to that of the *martyrs of Christ* which he had shed. Still hath the great Head of the church the same omnipotent efficacy, the same ability to influence the heart, to overcome the strongest prejudices, and to turn bigots into true believers; and, rather than his church shall want its servants and its ornaments, he will find them among its most cruel enemies.

17, 18 Had the gospel been taught St. Paul by Ananias, or Peter,

19 or any of the apostles, his readiness to receive it from such teachers, and to preach it at the certain expence of his reputation, his interest, and his life, would no doubt have ranked him among the most illustrious witnesses to the truth of Christiani-

11, 12 ty. But this additional fact of an original revelation of the

whole system of it to him independent of human teaching, deserves our admiration, and demands our praise. SECT. II.

God herein wrought according to the secret counsel of his Divine will, and that purpose by which he had separated Paul from the womb. In vain was it opposed by the prevailing prejudices of his education, or by the violence of his zeal for Judaism, and that proficiency in it by which he had eclipsed so many of his co-temporaries, and those of his own nation. All his zeal for the traditions of his fathers gave way to a yet greater zeal for a nobler object; a zeal, which carried him through Arabia and Syria, through Judea and Cilicia, and prevented him, in one sense as well as another, from *consulting with flesh and blood*, from being influenced by any selfish worldly views, or giving heed to any man's opinion. Verse 15 — 13, 14 — 21, 22 — 16

Adored be the grace that animated and supported him in overcoming every difficulty; and having so miraculously furnished him for the great work that he was called to, made him so gloriously successful in it. So may we be enabled to surmount every obstacle! and so may we be taught, as to *those things* which we have most highly esteemed, to *count them all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*, and to grudge no labour, self-denial, or suffering, by which the gospel may be any way promoted or adorned, and a testimony given of our faithful subjection to it!

SECT. III.

The Apostle, in prosecution of that design on which he entered in the preceding section, informs the Galatians of his journey from Antioch to Jerusalem, and of his interview with the apostles there, fourteen years after his conversion. Gal. II. 1—10.

GAL. II. 1.

THEN fourteen years after,

GALATIANS II. 1.

I HAVE just been telling you, that quickly after my journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, I traversed the regions of Syria and Cilicia, being *then* in a great measure unknown to the churches in Judea, otherwise than by my general character, and what they had heard of the surprising change wrought in me: I am now to add, that about *fourteen years after* my conversion,[a] when I had preached the word SECT. III. Gal. II. 1.

[a] *Fourteen years after.*] As it is certain that Paul saw both Peter and James in that journey to Jerusalem of which we have an account, Acts xv. 4 *&c. seq.* it is very natural to suppose he would mention it here, and that this is the journey

SECT. III. some time at Antioch, *I went again up to Jerusalem with Barnabas*, to consult with the church there upon the grand question of the freedom of the Gentiles from the Mosaic law; (Acts xv. 2.) *and* I *took Titus also with me*,[b] though he was uncircumcised, that I might therein shew my Christian liberty, and assert that of my Gentile brethren, against those who were so zealous in their attempts to invade it.

Gal. II. 1. I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 *But I* then *went up*, not to receive instructions in my work from any of the apostles there, or to be confirmed in my office by them, but *by* the appointment of a special *revelation*,[c] and to subserve a very different and important purpose, in which the peace and liberty of the church were much concerned. *And* when I was arrived there, and had the pleasure of meeting my brethren, I explained at large, and freely *laid before them* the contents of *that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles*, not only so far as it relates to the exemption of the Gentile converts from any obligation

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,

which he now refers to, (compare Vol. III. sect. xxxiii. note [a], and ver. 9. of this chapter:) and as we have found reason to believe that the council then held at Jerusalem did not happen later than the year 49, it seems reasonable to reckon the *fourteen years* here mentioned from his conversion, and not from the conclusion of those travels through Syria and Cilicia which he had mentioned ver. 21, of the foregoing chapter; for as we cannot suppose him to have finished his tour through those countries in much less than four years after his conversion, such a computation will bring back that ever-memorable event to the year 31, which was two years before Christ's death.—He does not here mention his going up to Jerusalem in the year 43, with what had been collected at Antioch for the poor brethren in Judea (of which we read Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25.) because he then saw none of the apostles; and the question here was about the opportunities he might have had of conversing with them.

[b] *Took Titus also with me.*] This is the earliest mention that we meet with of Titus; for he is no where mentioned by St. Luke in the Acts, and what we read of him in the second epistle to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6, 14; viii. 6.) as well as in that to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 10.) was later by some years. He is here said to have been a Greek (ver. 3.) and being born of Gentile parents was not circumcised: but where or when he was converted, is uncertain; only we may conclude he was converted by St. Paul, from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4.) and as he now took Titus with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, so he employed him afterwards on several occasions, and appears to have regarded him with great affection and endearment.

[c] *Went up by revelation.*] Dr. Whitby supposes in his note upon this place, that as St. Paul had said before, that he received the gospel which he preached *by the revelation of Jesus Christ* (chap. i. 12.) he only means by what he now declares, that he went up according to the revelation which he then received, and in this journey acted suitably to that revelation which had constituted him the apostle of the Gentiles, telling the church at Jerusalem, what things he had done among the Gentiles in pursuance of it. But it seems rather to be here implied, (as I have observed elsewhere, Vol. III. sect. xxxiii. note [a],) that in their sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, the church at Antioch were directed by a revelation made, either immediately to Paul himself, or to some other of the prophets there, relating to the important business they were sent upon.

SECT. III.

Gal. II. 2

but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain.

to observe the Mosaic law, but likewise with respect to the deliverance of the Jews themselves from the bondage of it: which gave them an opportunity of seeing how fully I was instructed in the mind of Christ, and how little I needed any farther teachings from them. But this account however I gave, not in a public assembly, *but privately*,[d] *to those who were of* greatest *note* and reputation in the church; *lest* some should have been found who would have cavilled at it, and by abusing some of the particulars, would have represented us as differing from each other; in consequence of which it might be feared, *I should* hereafter *run, or* hitherto *had run in vain*, as the good effects of my future or past labours would have been lessened or obstructed by the increase of their prejudices; and in particular, the intent of my journey to Jerusalem might have been hindered, had I then opened my thoughts too fully in the presence of a large and promiscuous assembly.

3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

But though I did not think myself obliged 3 in sincerity to make a public declaration of all that was in my breast on that subject, yet I did not take any step that looked like giving up the liberty of my Gentile brethren: for *neither Titus, who was* then *with me, being a Greek*, and still continuing in a state of uncircumcision, *was compelled* to submit to that rite,[e] though so many maintained that it was absolutely necessary *to be circumcised* in order to

4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

salvation, (Acts xv. 1, 5.) *And* I was more 4 averse to [*that*,] and rather favoured the dis-

[d] *But privately.*] I have elsewhere shewn at large, that the *secret* here referred to was not, as has been so confidently asserted, his preaching the gospel to the "idolatrous Gentiles," which was a fact it cannot be supposed he should endeavour to conceal from any: but the point which he communicated thus *in private*, was "the exemption, not of the Gentile "converts only, but of the Jews themselves, from the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies, as what they were no "longer bound to under the gospel, any "farther than as the peace and edification of others were concerned." On this (as I have shewn) there were sufficient reasons why he should choose to be on the reserve at present; yet when the purpose of his journey had been answered, and he had left Jerusalem, he used great freedom afterwards in publicly declaring his opinion. See Vol. III. § xxxiii. note [d], and § xxxv. note [a].

[e] *Neither Titus—was compelled*, &c.] This conduct of St. Paul with respect to Titus, in not submitting to his being circumcised, when it was insisted on as necessary to salvation, is very well consistent with what he afterwards did without constraint, to promote the circumcision of Timothy in different circumstances, (Acts xvi. 3;) as is shewn in the note on that text, Vol. III. sect. xxvi. note [a].

SECT. III. Gal. II. 4

inclination of Titus to it, *because of the false brethren*[t] [*that were*] *artfully introduced*, not only into the church, but the ministry, upon a general apprehension of their piety, without being sufficiently informed of their principles and tempers; *who had* before *slipped in* among us at Antioch, *to spy out* and make their ill-natured remarks upon *our liberty*, *which we have in Christ Jesus* with regard to these things, *that* by imposing on the church there, which consisted chiefly of Gentile converts, *they might* find means to *bring us into* a servile *bondage* to the law of Moses, by urging the necessity of submitting to the grievous and painful yoke

cause of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.

5 of its ceremonies: *To whom*, whatever court some thought proper to make to them, or whatever personal condescensions even I myself might sometimes yield to, (1 Cor. ix. 19, 20,) *we did not* either at Antioch, or at Jerusalem, *give place by* any compliance or *subjection* to their insolent demands *for so much as an hour*; but always entered our open protest against their principles, *that the truth of the gospel might continue with you*, and you might rest assured, by all the proofs we could give, that the Christian religion was sufficient for justification and salvation, without the super-addition of the Jewish rituals.

5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6 This was my conduct at Jerusalem on this grand occasion, nor was it upon the whole disapproved by those of my brethren for whom I had the greatest regard. *But* even *of those who* indeed *appeared to be* the most *considerable* and of the greatest note and eminence,[x] however some would set them up above me,

6 But of those who seemed to be

[t] *Because of the false brethren.*] I know not how far so late a writer as Epiphanius is to be credited in affirming (as he does Haer. xxviii.) that Cerinthus the heretic insisted absolutely on the Jewish observances, and having raised up several Jews into a most violent opposition against St. Peter, on his first going to the Gentiles (Acts xi. 2, 3.) contended afterwards at Antioch and Jerusalem for the necessity of circumcision, (Acts xv. 1, 5.)

[x] *But of those who appeared to be considerable.*] The apostle had before declared what was his conduct with respect to the false brethren; and now proceeds to those who were of real note and reputation: and there is no such difficulty in the construction here, as that there should be a necessity of supplying any thing to complete the sense, or of supposing an ellipsis of the article τὰ at the beginning of the verse, which, instead of removing a difficulty, would only involve the construction, which is obvious enough as it stands, if the parenthesis be rightly placed, so as only to include *(God accepteth no man's person;)* and without any supplement or transposition, the sense of the whole verse is easy.—And as there is no doubt but εἶναί τι in this verse, as well

somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat*, in conference added nothing to me.

as having conversed with Christ here on earth, and been apostles long before me, I must needs say, that whatsoever advantage they had, or *how great soever they formerly were* as to any personal privileges, *it makes no difference as to me*, nor does at all affect my character, or set me upon this account beneath them as to my knowledge in the gospel, (since *God*, who called me as well as them to the apostleship, *accepteth no man's person*, so as out of partial favour to constitute him supreme in his church, and lord of his brethren, but employs whom he will to be apostles, and qualifies them for it in what way he pleases; as it is manifest he hath done with reference to me,) *for they who were of* greatest *note* and reputation, when I engaged in conference with them, *added nothing further to me*, nor were capable of informing me of any thing which I had not before fully learned by immediate revelation from Christ. *But* 7 *on the contrary*, far from pretending to give me any new instructions, or to invest me with any new powers, they recognized my full title to the apostleship in all its extent; and plainly *seeing that I was intrusted with* the chief management and direction of *the gospel of the uncircumcision*, or of the mission to the Gentiles, *as Peter was* [*with that*] which was especially directed to those *of the circumcision*; *(For* in- 8 deed it was very apparent, that *he who wrought* so *effectually in Peter*, to qualify him *for the apostleship of the circumcision*, *wrought effectually also* by the same miraculous powers and endowments *in me*, to fit me *for* my mission to *the Gentiles;)* My worthy associates in this 9 high office seeing this, *and knowing the grace that was given to me*, and how remarkably I was furnished for the great work in which I was engaged by the extraordinary favour I had received from Christ, *James, and Cephas, and*

Gal II. 6.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostle-ship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles:)

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave

as in ver. 2 and 9, is to be understood of those who really were men of note and eminence, and does indeed refer to the apostles themselves, (who are expressly named in ver. 9.) however it may be a literal translation, it carries in it to an English ear, (as Mr. Locke observes,) too diminishing a sense, to render it as if St. Paul had only spoke of them as those who *seemed to be somewhat*, and who *seemed to be pillars*. I have therefore rendered it as expressive of the character of those who indeed *appeared to be considerable*, and were confessedly of the first rank, and *pillars* of the church.

SECT. III.

Gal. II. 9.

John, who appeared to be, and were indeed, the *pillars* of the church, on which that at Jerusalem especially rested, as the great ornament and support of it under Christ, and on whose pious labours and wise conduct so much of the interest of the gospel in general depended, willingly *gave to me and Barnabas* my companion, *the right-hands*, in token *of* receiving us into full *fellowship* and apostleship with them; *that we* [*might go*] and preach, as we had done before, *to the Gentiles*, wherever it should please the great Head of the church to direct us, *and* that *they* for the present would continue their endeavours *to* promote Christianity among those of *the circumcision*,[h] till the whole harvest of the Jews in those parts should be gathered in:

to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should* go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 *Only* [*they proposed*] *that we should be mindful of the poor* Christians in Judea, so as to make collections in their favour, as we proceeded in our progress through the Gentile churches; *which very thing I also* of my own accord *was forward to do* with all the diligence I could from the sincere affection I had for them, and the concern I had for their encouragement and support under the frequent sufferings they endured from their oppressive and rapacious enemies.

10 Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

IMPROVEMENT.

WARM and eager as the temper of St. Paul naturally was, it must certainly give us great pleasure to observe in how prudent and steady a manner he conducted himself when once engaged in the sacred work of the Christian ministry and apostleship. With what integrity and resolution did he behave on the one hand, that he would not give place for an hour to the false brethren, who had slipped in among his converts to spy out and subvert their liberty? And on the other, with what caution that he might not frustrate the purposes of his own ministry, by carrying that which was in general the cause of truth, of liberty, and justice, to an excess? Thus also let us act, hold-

Verse 3—5

2

[h] *They* for the present would continue, &c.] I express it with this caution, because there is no reason to believe that the labours of Peter, James, and John, were entirely appropriated to those of the circumcision; as, on the other hand, we are assured that those of the apostle Paul were not confined to the uncircumcised Gentiles; for we often find him preaching to the Jews, and indeed, wherever he came, he proposed the gospel in the first place to them.

ing the truth in love and in prudence, and labouring to do all the good we can with as little offence as possible. SECT. III.

While we are contending for the liberty of Christians, against the imposition of things which at best are indifferent, we may possibly be obliged to dispute the point with some who are persons of worth and eminence; but God accepteth no man's person. We may give them all the honour that is due to their wisdom, their piety, and their station, without yielding up what ought to be dearer to us than any human approbation or friendship, the dictates of our conscience as in the sight of God. Ver. 6

Persons of true steadiness and candour, such as deserve to be esteemed pillars of the church, will not suffer themselves to be so borne down by popular prejudices as to disown their brethren, whom God hath honoured with the ministry as well as themselves, because they exercise it in some diversity of forms; but will be willing (so far as they can) to give them the right-hand of fellowship, and will perhaps wish to be able to do it more entirely and openly than some human constitutions will admit. 7—9

In this however may we all agree, after the example of this blessed apostle, ever to do what we can to promote mutual charity among different denominations of Christians; to be expressed by a readiness to bear one another's burdens, and to afford liberal relief as Providence gives opportunity. And we shall find, that as a disunion of hearts adds weight to the least cause of division, so fervent and unfeigned love will by mutual condescension and indulgence heal the breach, or happily prevent its most fatal consequences. 10

SECT. IV.

The apostle gives an account of his opposing Peter publicly at Antioch, and standing up in defence of the liberty of the church from Jewish impositions. Gal. II. 11, *to the end.*

GAL. II. 11. BUT when Peter was come to Antioch,[a]

GALATIANS II. 11.

I HAVE been telling you how entirely I agreed with the chief apostles of the circumcision, in the interview which I had with them at Jerusalem, when that decree was made in favour of the converted Gentiles, by which they were declared free from any obligation to observe the rituals of the Mosaic law. *But when Peter was come to Antioch,*[a] after Barna- SECT. IV. Gal. II. 11

[a] *When Peter was come to Antioch.*] It is a just remark of Mons. Saurin (Serm. Vol. XI. p. 49,) that Father Harduin seems to have been solicitous to increase

SECT. IV.

Gal. II. 12

bas, and I were returned thither (Acts xv. 30,) *I opposed him to the face, because* indeed *he was* so far left to his own spirit, as to behave in such a manner, that he very much deserved *to be blamed. For before some* Jewish zealots, who were strict in the observation of those rituals, *came from* the apostle *James* who was then at Jerusalem, *he did* upon all occasions *eat* and converse freely *with the Gentiles* there, who had embraced the gospel and had not submitted to circumcision; *but when they were come, he withdrew* from that freedom of converse, *and separated himself* from them, as if he had thought them unclean, though the Lord had so expressly taught him the contrary, (see Acts x. 28;) and this he did, not from any change in his sentiments and apprehension of things, but purely as *fearing them of the circumcision*, and being unwilling to displease them, thinking their censures of much greater importance than they really were.

tioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 *And* I thought it the more necessary to take public notice of it, as *the other* converted *Jews*, who had before used the like freedom, *dissembled* their true sentiments *also*, by a weak conformity *with him* in this scrupulous avoiding their brethren; *so that even Barnabas* too, though so honest and worthy a man, and one of the messengers who had passed with me between Antioch and Jerusalem, and been acknowledged there as an apostle of the Gentiles, *was* himself in some measure *carried away with their dissimulation*; which could not but give great grief and offence to the Gentile Christians, who had been so particularly committed to his care as well as mine. *But when I saw that they did not* in this affair *walk uprightly, according to the truth* and design *of the gospel*, which indeed taught the contrary, *I said to*

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him: insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all,—

the number of his chimeras as much as possible, (and more I never met with in any learned author than in him,) by adopting the pious frauds of some of the ancients, who, to defend themselves from Porphyry's objection against Christianity from this error in the conduct of Peter, denied it to be Peter the apostle who was here spoken of, and interpreted it of another Cephas, whom they pretended to be one of the Seventy: an hypothesis as unnecessary as it is improbable. See Hard. Diss. in loc.

SECT. IV.

Peter in the presence of [*them*] *all*[b], when a numerous assembly was met together.

Gal. II. 14.

—If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, whycompellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

I must speak to thee, Peter, with the freedom of a Christian brother and fellow-apostle, on a particular of thy conduct which hath given public offence: let me then ask thee, *If thou, being a Jew*, and having been brought by circumcision under the strongest engagements to fulfil the whole law, *livest* frequently (as we have many of us seen) *after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews*, making no scruple to converse freely with the Gentiles without conforming to the ceremonial customs of the Jews; *why dost thou* now, by a change in thy conduct, as it were *compel the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* Is it not at least as lawful for them to neglect the Jewish observances as it was for thee to do it but a few days ago? *We* [*who*] *are by* 15 *nature*, that is, by birth and education, *Jews*, and so entitled to many peculiar privileges,[c] *and* who are *not* unclean, profligate, and abandoned *sinners of the Gentiles* that walk in idolatry and all kinds of wickedness; We, I say, *knowing* 16 in our own hearts, and having been effectually convinced, *that a man is not justified by the works of the* Mosaic *law, but* only *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, and cannot be accepted in the sight of God but by cordially and truly believing in him; *even we* ourselves have taken refuge here, and, giving up all confidence in the law

15 We *who* are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even

[b] *I said to Peter in the presence of* [*them*] *all.*] Had this been matter only of *private offence*, to be sure Paul would have known that duty required him to expostulate with Peter *privately* upon it before he had brought it before such an *assembly*; but as it was a *public affair*, in which great numbers were so sensibly affected, this method was most proper. Probably this happened after public worship; and it would seem the less surprising, considering the conferences which used to be held in the Jewish synagogues before the assembly was broke up; of which many instances still occur to those excellent persons in Germany and the neighbouring regions, who are engaged in a mission to the Jews, which may Divine grace succeed!—It is a very just observation of Mr. Jeffery here, that had any imposture been carried on, the contention of these two great managers would probably have been an occasion of discovering it.—That no objection against the authority of Peter, as an apostle and inspired writer, can be derived from this dispute, will follow on the principles laid down in our Essay on Inspiration at the close of Vol. III. See also note[t], on Acts xv. 7, Vol. III. p. 221.

[c] *We who are by nature Jews*, &c.] Mr. L'Enfant thinks Paul speaks of *himself* in the *plural number*, and rests the matter on his own practice: but to me it appears evident he meant to include the Jewish believers in general, and to argue from the virtual confession they had all made of the insufficiency of their own obedience to the law, if considered as a ground of justification.

SECT. IV.

for justification, *have believed in Jesus Christ* to this great purpose, *that we might* thus *be justified*, as I said before, *by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law:* this is the method we that are Jews have taken, as being thoroughly made sensible that it was absolutely necessary we should do so; *wherefore* it must be evident that *no flesh* living, whether he be Jew or Gentile, *shall* or can *be justified by the works of the law*, since none is capable of fully answering its demands, or can pretend to have paid an universal and unerring obedience to it. Judge then how absurd it would be to urge those who never were, like us under such obligations to the law, to come under them, when we ourselves have been obliged to give up our expectations from hence, and to have recourse to something so much higher and nobler. *But*, after all, *if seeking to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners*, if we are still in an unpardoned state under the guilt and power of sin, and notwithstanding all that Christ has done, his gospel and grace be not sufficient to justify us, unless there be something superadded to it by the law of Moses, *what* [*is*] *Christ then the minister of sin*, and not of justification? Must it not follow that he is so, if he hath introduced an imperfect dispensation, which will not sufficiently ensure the happiness of those that follow it? Yea, doth he not indeed teach sin, if justification cannot be obtained without the law, in teaching men to renounce all dependence upon it, as it is certain by his gospel he doth? But *God forbid* that any thing should ever be insinuated so much to the dishonour of God and of our glorious Redeemer!

Gal. II. 16.

we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

18 Thus I addressed myself to Peter on this public occasion, and shewed that the observance of the ceremonial law was not to be imposed on Christians. *Now if I build again the things which I* then *destroyed*, and insist (as some would charge me) on the necessity of the works of the law for justification, I in effect condemn what I then did, and, setting up the very principles which I opposed, *I acknowledge myself* to have been *a transgressor* in attempting to pull them

18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

down:[d] but I am so far from acting such an inconsistent part, that I declare myself entirely in the same sentiments which I then publicly professed. *For* though I was once so zealous a bigot for the rights of the law, yet now, upon the whole, *I through the law am dead to the law;* the more I consider its nature and tenor, the more I am convinced that it is absolutely impossible that I or any man living should be justified by it, and therefore I give up all such expectations: and yet the effect of it is, not my being a lawless licentious creature, but quite the contrary; it is, *that I might live to God* in a state of favour and acceptance with him, animated by nobler views and hopes than the law could give, and therefore engaged to a more generous, sublime, and extensive obedience than it was capable of producing. For *I am crucified with Christ*, and have such a sense of his dying love upon my heart, and of the excellency of that method of justification and salvation which he hath accomplished on the cross, that I am in consequence of it dead to all the allurements of the world, and to all views of obtaining righteousness and life by the law: *nevertheless, I live* a new and spiritual life, in a conformity to the will of God, and feel the comforts of it in my heart; *yet*, to speak properly, it is *not I* that live, not I my former or my present self, by any strength or power of my own, *but* it is *Christ* that by the energy of his word and Spirit *liveth in me*, and continually influences and quickens my soul to every good action and affection: *and the life which I now live in the flesh*, while surrounded with the snares and sorrows of mortali-

SECT. IV.

Gal. II. 19.

19 For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God.

20 I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son

20

[d] *I acknowledge myself a transgressor.*] Mr. L'Enfant seems to consider this verse as a continuation of Paul's speech at Antioch. He would render and connect it thus: "On the contrary, so far are we "from being *made sinners* by neglecting "*justification* by the *law*, that, if we taught "the necessity of its works, we should "*become transgressors* in building again the "things that we have destroyed." But if this interpretation was to be admitted, we should not only find it hard to clear up the argument, but must, I think, suppose the following verses likewise a part of the speech to Peter; which would make them much less pertinent and natural than if we suppose them the overflowings of Paul's devout heart in addressing the Galatians.—His speech to Peter rather seems to have gone no farther than the foregoing verse, and γαρ is often used with such a latitude that we may take it in the beginning of this verse to signify *Now*, and so consider Paul as shewing here, that whatsoever some insinuated to his prejudice, there was no inconsistency in his doctrine and practice with what he had then so openly declared.

SECT. IV.

ty, *I live in the* continual exercise of that *faith which* [*is*] established in and centered upon the perfect righteousness *of the Son of God*; on whom alone it is that I depend for justification, and am daily deriving new influences from him, by realizing and affectionate views of that gracious and condescending Saviour, *who loved me, and* that to such an astonishing degree, that he *delivered himself up* to torments and death *for me*, that he might procure my redemption and salvation.

Gal. II. 20.

of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

21 So that you see upon the whole, when you consider all the tenor of my conduct, as well as my conference with Peter at Antioch, that *I do not*, like many others, *frustrate the grace of God* in Christ, and render void that method of salvation which the gospel hath revealed, which a behaviour like that which I reproved, if pursued into all its consequences, must appear to do; *for if righteousness* [*come*] *by the law*, and that made a sufficient provision for our being justified and accepted in the sight of God, *then* there was no necessity of the grace of God in giving his Son for us, and *Christ is dead in vain*, since he died to redeem us from the curse of the law, as being utterly hopeless and irrecoverable by that dispensation alone.

21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a most generous and worthy spirit that was shewn by the apostle Paul on this occasion, in his being so ready to stand up for Christian liberty, and to reprove even Peter himself, though so honoured and beloved a brother, when he acted a cowardly and inconsistent part. He did not meanly censure him to others, and endeavour by private insinuations to lessen his character; but by his openly rebuking him he shewed himself a sincere friend, and took the most effectual method to prevent the ill consequences of his dissimulation, and at the same time to recover his brother to a more worthy and consistent conduct.

Ver. 11.

14

How little there is in all this passage that looks like any peculiar authority assumed on the part of St. Peter, or acknowledged by St. Paul, every unprejudiced reader will easily observe: and perhaps God might suffer this great apostle of the circumcision thus to fall, and to be thus corrected by the apostle of the Gentiles, the more effectually to discountenance those arrogant and groundless claims of the pretended successors of St. Peter to su-

12, & *seq.*

premacy and infallibility, which have introduced so much confusion and infamy into the church. SECT. IV.

We may well rejoice in the review of a passage which so strongly asserts Christian liberty on the one hand, and exemplifies the very life of Christian grace on the other. Let it ever be retained in our memories, that we are *justified by the faith of Christ,* Ver. 16
and not by the works of the law; and may our conduct be agreeable to the doctrine we profess, giving up all expectations inconsistent with this decision, yet ever remembering that *Christ is* 17
not the minister of sin. Let faith in him engage us, whilst *dead to the law* as a covenant of works, to be observant of it as a rule 19
of life, and so to *live to God* as those who are still *under a law to Christ* (1 Cor. ix. 21); and, animated by the influences of his grace, may our souls feel more and more of the efficacy of his death, *who loved us and gave himself for us.*

Strongly indeed will the affecting consideration of the death of 20
Christ impress our hearts, when we are conscious of our interest and concern in it. May the impression last through life; and may we remember that we are not merely to make one solemn address to our adorable Redeemer, committing by an act of faith our souls into his hands; but that our faith is daily to be renewing its views of him, that so the life which we now live in the flesh, in the midst of so many vanities and dangers, may be conducted by the continual influence of this principle. May we therefore daily regard him as our Instructor and Governor, our Atonement and Intercessor, our Example and Strength, our Guardian and Forerunner: and, in proportion to the degree in 21
which such views as these prevail, the grace of God, instead of being frustrated, will be the more admired and esteemed; and as it was impossible that righteousness should be attainable by the law, it will appear Christ hath not died in vain, but that his death was necessary to procure our justification, and is the only sure foundation of our faith and hope.

SECT. V.

The apostle reproves the Galatians for their instability with regard to the important doctrine of justification by faith; which he farther confirms from the instance of Abraham, who was thus justified, and in whose blessing we share, through the redemption Christ has wrought out for us. Gal. III. 1—14.

GAL. III. 1. GALATIANS III. 1.

O FOOLISH Ga- THESE are the real sentiments of my heart which I have now laid before you, and you were formerly taught them at large. But O ye

SECT. V.

Gal. III. 1.

thoughtless Galatians, after all the instructions I have given you, how little do they prevail in your breasts? May I not even ask you, *who hath* by some fallacious fatal charm *enchanted you*[a], and as it were dazzled the eyes of your mind with the vain glitterings of sophistry and delusive arts of evasion, *that you should not* go on to *obey the truth* so solemnly inculcated upon you; even you, *before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified hath been* so *evidently set forth* and strongly delineated *among you*[b], in the most affectionate representations of his word and ordinances? One would have imagined these lively views should for ever have secured your fidelity to him, and have fortified your hearts against every insinuation injurious to the honour of his cross.

tians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 But methinks even now the matter might be brought to a short issue: and to this purpose, there is *this only I would learn of you, Did ye receive the Spirit* in its extraordinary operations in and upon you, *by* a regard to *the works of the* Mosaic *law*, or any other law on which you might depend for justification as a matter of legal claim? *or* were you made partakers of it *by the hearing of* the gospel, proposing the method of justification by *faith* in the righteousness and grace of the Redeemer[c]? If any of the new teachers that are come among you can work such miracles in proof of their tenets, and confer such gifts on their followers, you will be

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

[a] *Who hath enchanted you?*] I know some would render, Βασκανει, *Who hath envied your happiness?* But as the Jewish zealots could not have any sense of the happiness of those Christians they endeavoured to disturb, it is not, I think, so natural to refer their attempts to envy; and it is well known the word also signifies *to enchant*. It strongly expresses the *unreasonable turn* their minds had taken, so that one would imagine they had been deprived of the *regular use* even of their natural faculties.

[b] *Before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified, &c.*] There is no room to *object* that this is merely an *argument to the passions*; for in proportion to the affecting sense they had of the love of Christ in submitting to crucifixion for them, would be the rational sense of the obligations they were under to him, to preserve his gospel pure, and his church free and happy.

[c] *Did ye receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*] There is no doubt but that it was on their becoming Christians that they *received the Spirit*; and therefore that it could not be ascribed to *the law*, which they were strangers to till afterwards, but must be owing to that *faith* in which they were instructed by the gospel on their embracing Christianity. Nor can it justly be objected that they still retained the Christianity by which the Spirit was received; for they were now perverted to a different system by their new teachers, and that which Paul had preached at first among them, when they received the Spirit, was a Christianity of which Judaism made no part.

SECT. V.

Gal. III. 3.

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

more excusable in hearkening to them than in present circumstances you can possibly be.

But *are you* indeed *so inconsiderate* as to need being reminded in this manner? Where is the benefit you can propose by turning to the law? *Having begun in the Spirit*, having known the spirituality, power, and energy of the glorious gospel, *are ye now* seeking to be *made perfect by the flesh?* or have you any expectation of attaining to a superior degree of perfection and excellency, by a submission to those carnal ordinances of the law which at first view appear to be so much beneath it, and to be altogether insufficient for it? If you are tempted to so great a fall as this, let me remind you of the difficulties you have already borne for Christianity; many of which have been brought upon you by the instigation of the Jews, whose hatred is so violent against it. Say then, my brethren, *have ye suffered so many things in vain?*[d] Will you give up the benefit of all these sufferings, and lose, in a great measure at least, the reward of them, by relinquishing what is so material in that scheme of doctrine you have been suffering for? Shall all that you have endured be thus in vain? *if* indeed [*it be*] *yet in vain*, which I am willing to hope it is not entirely, and that however your principles may have been shaken, yet God will not permit them to be quite overthrown.

4 Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.

5 He therefore that

I know that your favourite teachers have many arts of address with which they endeavour to soothe you, and to conciliate your regards to themselves, while they would alienate them from me: but when you come to the most solid and authentic proofs of a Divine mission, have you

[d] *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?*] Should it be said, "that, notwithstanding the Galatians were for adding "the observation of the law to the gospel, it would not necessarily destroy "their hopes as Christians, nor deprive "them of the reward of that courage they "had hitherto shewn in its defence:" yet it must be allowed that some degree of their reward might be lost, as it might derogate from their future glory, to have been through inconsideration, and prejudices rashly admitted, accessary to the corruption and consequent obstruction of the gospel: and also, that as much persecution might be declined by admitting this mixture of Judaism, there was reason to fear that it was a regard to their own present ease and convenience that led them to it, (compare chap. v. 11, and vi. 12;) which was in a manner cancelling the good effect of their former resolution; and indeed any thing that looked like a sinful temporizing in those who had before been confessors for the truth, might occasion peculiar scandal, and endanger many more.

SECT. V. Gal. III. 5.

not seen them wrought among you, in confirmation of the doctrine I delivered to you? *He therefore that ministereth to you* an extraordinary supply of *the Spirit* by the laying on of his hands, *and* that *worketh* other evident and uncontrouled *miracles among you*,[e] [*doeth he it*] *by the works of the law*, and in virtue of any commission he had received from God to inculcate the observation of the Mosaic precepts? *or* is it *by the hearing of faith* that he doeth it? Is it not evidently by that gospel which you have heard me preach, and which exhorts you to seek justification and salvation by faith? And will you then forsake a doctrine which has been so signally attested, and exchange it for one, the teachers of which have no such attestations to produce?

ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles, among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

6 And this method which the gospel proposeth is agreeable to the example which you have in the great father of the faithful: for *even as* you read of *Abraham* (Gen. xv. 6.) long before he was circumcised, "that he *believed God*, relying "on the promise that he had made him, *and it* "*was imputed to him for righteousness*;" it was set down to his account, as an evidence of his

6 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

7 being a righteous person: *Know ye therefore*, and infer from hence, *that* as faith was the brightest part of the character of this illustrious patriarch, so all *they who* [*are*] *of faith*, all that have the same principle working in their hearts, and engaging them to receive the gospel-dispensation, *the same are*, and shew themselves by a like disposition to be, *the children of Abraham*, and may expect to inherit the same blessings with him, as by embracing the gospel they manifest the same principle and temper.

7 Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 *And* again, the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration *the scripture* was written, *foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles*, when he should call them by his grace, in the same manner as he justified Abraham, only *through faith*, *did*

8 And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through

[e] *Worketh miracles among you.*] It is a just and important observation of Mr. Baxter here, that it was a great display of Divine Wisdom to suffer such *contentions* to arise thus *early* in the church as should make it necessary for the apostles to appeal to the *miracles* wrought *before*, and *upon* those who were afterwards in some degree alienated from them; that future ages might be convinced of the *certainty* of these *miracles* as matters of fact beyond all possibility of contradiction. See Baxter's Practical Works, Vol. II. p. 118.

SECT. V. Gal. III. 8.

faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

in effect *before* the revelation of it to the world *preach* the glad tidings of *the gospel unto Abraham* himself, [*saying*] once and again, (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18.) "*In thee shall all nations* of the earth *be blessed;*" [f] that is to say, By their faith in that glorious Person who is to descend from thee, all persons whatsoever shall be blessed, of whatever nation they be, who learn to resemble thee in their readiness to receive every message from God with an entire submission and obedience.

9 So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

So then it appears, that *they who are* really partakers of the grace *of faith*, and seek to be justified by it; they who have an unfeigned principle of faith in their hearts, and shew it by giving due credit to this great and indubitable testimony which God hath borne to his Son; they *are blessed with believing Abraham*, and shall inherit the promises made to him, though they are, as he was when he first received these promises, in a state of uncircumcision.

10 For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.

Now it is evident that this blessing must be received by the gospel; *for as many as are of* that covenant, which relates only to *the works of the law*, and have no higher views and expectations than a legal dispensation could give, *are* indeed *under a curse*, [g] and by every breach of that law become obnoxious to it. And of this, with respect to the Mosaic law, we have as express a proof as can be imagined: *for it is written*, with regard to all that are under it (Deut. xxvii. 26.) "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one who* confirmeth not all the words of this law, that is, "who *continueth not in all things which are* "*written in the book of the law, to do them.*"

[f] *In thee shall all nations* of the earth *be blessed.*] It may perhaps be asked, "What "evidence there is that *this promise* "meant the converting Jews and Gen"tiles to Christianity, rather than con"verting the Gentiles to Judaism, and "so blessing them with a participation "of the *privileges* originally granted "to the natural seed of Abraham?" But besides what the apostle afterwards says for clearing up this point, it may be answered, that the Mosaic œconomy was so constituted, that it never could be an universal thing; and that when it was considered what sort of a person Christ in fact was, there would appear reason to believe that *this promise* referred to him, even separate from the authority of the apostle in asserting it, and how dubious soever the sense of the oracle might appear till it was illustrated by the event.

[g] *Are under a curse.*] Dr. Whitby proves (in his note on ver. 13,) that the *law* of Adam was attended with *a curse* as well as that of Moses; and that it is *the more general curse* which is here intended, as illustrated by what Moses expressed as the sanction of his institutions.

SECT. V.

It is therefore a perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to every one of its injunctions, which the law requires: and as every man's conscience must tell him that he hath not performed this, he must see the dreadful denunciation levelled at himself, and dooming him to death and misery.

Gal. III. 10.

11 *And that no man is justified in the sight of God by* the performance of *the law*, or by his own obedience to it, [*is*] farther *evident* from God's appointment of another way of justification; *for* (as the prophet saith, Habak. ii. 4.) "*The just*, or righteous man, that is, he who "shall finally be treated by God as such, *shall* "*live by faith*:"[h] he shall be justified and saved by trusting in the mercy of an almighty God through Christ, and resting on the promise he hath graciously made of pardon and salvation even to sinful creatures, who shall by faith

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 apply to him for righteousness and life. *Now* it is manifest that *the law is not of faith*, nor doth it allow of such a way of justification; *but* puts it on another and most rigorous footing, insisting on exact obedience to all its commands, and declaring (Lev. xviii. 5.) "that *the man that doeth* "*them*, *shall live in* or by *them*:" he who perfectly conforms himself to these precepts shall have a right to happiness in consequence of them; but he that breaks them must bear the penalty without any farther assistance from a law which, being in one instance violated, must for ever condemn the transgressor.

12 And the law is not of faith; but, The man that doeth them, shall live in them.

13 But ever adored be the riches of Divine grace, *Christ hath redeemed us* who believe in his name *from the* terrible *curse of the law*,[i] and bought

13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, be-

[h] *The just shall live by faith.*] As the apostle shows in the next verse that there was no obtaining life by the *law* without a perfect personal obedience, *faith*, which stands here in opposition to it, must signify a firm belief of the promise of God, and acting according to it in a dependence upon Christ for righteousness; which is the way of *justification* that the gospel has revealed. Compare note [4], on Rom. i. 17, Vol. IV. p. 16.

[i] *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*] The *curse of the law* from which Christ has redeemed us was that which doomed us to *eternal misery*; from whence it hath been very plausibly inferred that the *law of Moses* was established on the sanction of *future punishments*. But perhaps it may be solidly answered, that the apostle, arguing concerning the *law of God in general*, the breach of which did certainly render obnoxious to *future punishments*, may mention the circumstance of the Mosaic law leaving every presumptuous offender to die *under a curse*, as an intimation of those melancholy prospects with respect to *futurity* which we must grant it certainly gave

SECT. V.

ing made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree.

us off from that servitude and misery to which it inexorably doomed us, by *being* himself *made a curse for us*, and enduring the penalty which our sins had deserved: for such was the death which he bore in our stead; not only when considered as a capital punishment, which universally implies something of this, but as thus stigmatized by the express declaration of the law against every one in such a particular circumstance; *for it is written* (Deut. xxi. 23), "*Cursed* [*is*] *every one that hangeth on a tree:*" now Christ, as you well know, was hung upon a tree: he expired on the cross, and his dead body hung for some time upon it. And this, in his adorable condescension, he submitted to for us and our salvation; *that* the curse having been borne by him in our room, *the blessing of Abraham* in all its extent of spiritual benefits, and that adoption which was given in him, *might come*, not only on believing Jews, but *on the Gentiles* also, *through Christ Jesus* the great anointed Saviour; and particularly *that we*, even the whole church of Christian converts, *might through* the exercise of a living and sincere *faith* in him, *receive the promise of the Spirit* as the seal of our adoption[k], both in the effusion of its miraculous gifts, so far as they may conduce to the edification of the church, and in the rich abundance of its saving graces.

Gal. III. 13.

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith:

14

even though we should not suppose that it contained an *express* threatening of *such punishments*: which I do not see that it any where does, and which I think the learned Mr. Warburton hath fully proved that it doth not. And it is evident that the course of the apostle's argument here implies, that *all* true believers *are redeemed from the curse*; and consequently, that he speaks of a *curse*, to which *all* as *sinners*, were liable; whereas the Gentiles being under no obligation to the *Mosaic* law at all, could not possibly be *directly* affected by *its curse*, nor could indeed be *at all* affected by it, otherwise than in the latitude in which we have explained this passage.

[k] *That we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*] It is justly observed by the learned Diodate here, that the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit of God had been so frequently promised by the prophets as the great blessing of the latter day, that it is here used as *synonymous* to the *blessing of Abraham*. And Mr. Howe very properly argues from hence the great importance of the Spirit, since the imparting it is represented as the great blessing by which the curse is removed; from whence (says he) it follows that the withdrawing and withholding it is the great calamity which falls upon men by their apostacy from God. See Howe's Works, Vol. 1. p. 237.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. V. Verse 1. THROUGH the amazing goodness of God to us we share with the Galatians in this great privilege, that *Jesus Christ crucified* is *evidently set forth among us.* Let us make the object familiar to our view, to our hearts: and O that we may all feel its powerful influence, to engage us to obey the truth, and to comply with the practical design of the gospel! O that none of the enchantments of this vain world may be able to draw us aside from a becoming regard to it! May those especially who have
3, 4 begun in the Spirit, and perhaps have suffered many difficulties already in the cause of religion, be concerned that they may not suffer so many things in vain, and after all their pretensions and hopes make an end in the flesh, by forsaking that excellent cause!
6, 7 That we may be deemed the children of Abraham, let us have the same faith with him; that believing in God as he did, and trusting in the promised Messiah, we may attain that righteousness which it is impossible to obtain by the deeds of the law, which insists upon perfect obedience, and passeth sentence upon every one that has transgressed it. Nothing can be more important than to endeavour to impress our souls with this great
10 and fundamental truth, that if we are of the works of the law, and trust in these for justification, we are under a curse. O that God may graciously thunder that curse in the ears of sleeping sinners, and make them sensible of their guilt and danger; that as *prisoners of justice*, yet in some measure *prisoners of hope* (Zech. ix. 12), they may *flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them* in the gospel (Heb. vi. 18.)
13 We need not go far for help. No sooner are we wounded (as it were) in one verse, than we find provision for our healing in another. For *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law;* and this in a method never sufficiently to be admired, even by *making himself a ransom*, yea and becoming *a curse for us;* submitting, not only to a great infamy and wretchedness in his life, but to an ignominious and accursed *death*, being *slain and hung upon a tree* (Acts v. 30; x. 39.)

To him let us apply, that the curse may be removed; and with humble confidence in him, let us lift up our eyes in cheer-
14 ful expectation, that though by birth we are Gentiles, the blessing of Abraham will come upon us, and that through faith we shall receive the promise of the Spirit. And what promise can be more valuable than this? what blessing more desirable, than to be enlightened, to be quickened, to be sanctified, to be com-
11 forted by the Spirit? As the just, may we live by faith; and make it our daily request at the throne of grace, that God will implant and increase that Divine principle in our hearts, even such a faith as shall work by love, and prove a genuine principle of sincere and universal obedience.

SECT. VI.

The apostle farther illustrates the stability and importance of the covenant made with Abraham as the father of believers, which the Mosaic covenant could not infringe, and to an application to which its greatest severities were intended to lead. Gal. III. 15, *to the end.*

GALATIANS III. 15.

GAL. III. 15. BRETHREN, I speak after the manner of men: Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.

I HAVE been speaking, *brethren*, of the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and have shewn that, according to the original tenor of it, all his believing seed, whether they be or be not circumcised, must be entitled to many very valuable privileges. And herein *I speak after the manner of men*, and reason on the principles of common equity, according to what is the allowed rule of all human compacts; for *though it be but the covenant of a man* with his fellow-creature, *yet if it be* once legally *confirmed* by mutual promise and seal, *no* honest *man* concerned afterwards *cancelleth* what was agreed to by it, *or addeth* any thing *to it* which should alter the terms of it, without the consent of the other stipulating party. SECT. VI. Gal. III. 15.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many: but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Now, to apply this to the case before us, *the* 16 *promises* relating to the justification of believers *were spoken* by God at first *to Abraham*, *and to his seed*, who are expressly mentioned as making a party with him in the covenant. And here by the way you will observe, that *he saith not*, "*And to seeds*," in the plural number, *as* speaking *of many: but* in the singular number, *as of one*, "*And to thy seed;*" not extending it to a variety of seeds, which might descend from him, but limiting what he says to one,[a] *which is* all

[a] *He saith not*, "*And to seeds*," *as of many*; &c.] One would not easily allow that the apostle founds his argument on a presumption, that *seed* cannot signify a *plurality* of persons; since (not to mention a thousand other texts,) in that very *covenant with Abraham* to which he refers, God said Gen. xv. 5, *So shall thy seed be*, that is, it shall be as numerous *as the stars of heaven*. Nor can any instance be produced in which the greatest number of persons to descend from any one are called *his seeds*. Therefore, with Bishop Burnet (in his Four Discourses, p. 66,) I take it to be only the apostle's saying, in *bad Greek* I confess, but with good sense and reason, that the *promises* made to Abraham are *not only* appropriated to *one* line of his descendants, that is, to those by Isaac; but centre in *one*

SECT. VI. to centre in *Christ;* out of regard to whom that branch of Abraham's family from which he was to spring was in so remarkable a manner separated from the rest.

Gal. III. 16

17 *And this I say* further, on the principles laid down above, [*that*] *the covenant which was long before confirmed by* the promise of *God with respect to Christ*, as the illustrious Seed referred to, and the great universal blessing exhibited in the promise, *the law which was* given at mount Sinai *four hundred and thirty years after* the date of it[b] *cannot disannul*, [*so*] *that it should make the promise* void and *ineffectual;* which it must have done if the observation of that law had been for the future the necessary means of

17 And this I say, *that* the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18 justification and happiness. *For if the inheritance* of Abraham's blessing [*be*] suspended on such a condition as not to be obtained but by the observation *of the law*, it must then follow that [*it is*] *no more* the effect *of the promise*, which is indeed quite abrogated by such a clog: *but* it is evident that *God* freely *gave* [*it to*] *Abraham by promise;* and therefore it must be left in such a state as that the honour of the promise may be secure, which otherwise would be abolished and disgraced, (Rom. iv. 13, 14.)

18 For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19 But it may be objected, If justification and eternal life cannot be obtained by these means, *to what purpose then* [*serveth*] *the law*, or what significancy hath it? I answer, That *it was added* after the promise was made, *because of transgressions;*[c] that the Jews might either be pre-

19 Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till

illustrious *person*, with regard to whom the rest are made partakers of the great blessing exhibited in the *Abrahamic covenant*. And this interpretation I greatly prefer to theirs who suppose that Christ here signifies the *mystical body of Christ*, or the *aggregate of all believers;* which interpretation will no more afford an argument from these words than the preceding. And if we suppose it merely a remark by way of illustration, I think no sense so easy as that which is favoured by ver. 19.

[b] *Four hundred and thirty years after.*] To make out this computation, Dr. Whitby and several other commentators proceed thus. The first celebrated *promise* was made to Abraham when he was *seventy-five* years old, (Gen. xii. 3, 4;) and from this date of it to the birth of Isaac, when Abraham was an *hundred* years old, (Gen. xxi. 5,) was 25 years: Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born, (Gen. xxv. 26.) Jacob went into Egypt at 130, (Gen. xlvii. 9.) And the Israelites sojourned there according to the Septuagint, (Exod. xii. 40.) 215 years, which completes the number. Compare note [f], on Acts vii. 6, Vol. III. p. 82.

[c] *It was added because of transgressions.*] As the *law* that was given by Moses neither did, nor could *disannul the covenant* made with Abraham, to which the Jews undoubtedly had a claim, the design of *that law* must therefore have been to engage those of his descendants that came under it to see their need of *that covenant*,

the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

served from idolatry and other crimes, or that they might be convicted of their guilt in committing them, and so be taught to seek after a more effectual method of obtaining pardon with an earnestness proportionable to the discovery it made of the malignity of their guilt: and with this view it was to continue *till the* illustrious *Seed should come*, even the Messiah, *to whom the promise was made;* into whom both Jews and Gentiles being ingrafted by faith, when the gospel-dispensation took place, should become without distinction the spiritual seed of Abraham, and be entitled to the blessings of the promise. Accordingly the law was given in a way agreeable to this design of it; [*and it was*] *ordained* and promulgated *by* the ministration of *angels* at mount Sinai,[d] and put *in the hands of* Moses, who was then appointed by God to act the part of *a mediator* between him and the people of Israel,[e] and was authorised to attest (as it were) their mutual and reciprocal obligations to each other; whereas the promise needed no mediator, but was immediately deposited by God in the hand of Abraham to whom it was made.

SECT. VI. Gal. III. 19.

20 Now a mediator is not *a mediator* [*the mediator*] *of one* party, but at least of two, between which he must pass, and by the nature

20 *Now* we know that *a mediator is not* merely

and more effectually to recommend *the promise* to them. And as the writing of the book of Genesis gave them a farther account of it than tradition had preserved, the law might be said to be added to that account because of transgressions; as their transgressions, not only of the ceremonial, but of the moral precepts, would appear more exceedingly sinful and dangerous, in proportion to the perspicuity of these precepts, and the awful solemnity with which they were delivered.

[d] *By the ministration of angels* at mount Sinai.] That the *law* was given *by the ministration of Angels*, is apparent from many passages of scripture (compare Psal. lxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; and Heb. ii. 2) though the Logos did undoubtedly *preside* among them, and it was *in his name* that the proclamation was made by *angels*, as his heralds and attendants.

[e] *In the hand of a mediator.*] It is a singular notion of Mr. Pierce on Heb. vii. 22, that *the mediator* here spoken of is *the order of Jewish high-priests*, who succeeding one another, were by virtue of their office *mediator* between God and the people. He pleads, that "the *law* is here "represented as left in the hands of a "mediator *till the promised seed should* "*come*." But the clause αχρις ου ελθη το σπερμα *till the seed should come*, will make very good sense if it be taken in connection with the preceding word προστεθη, and referred to what is said immediately before, of *the law* being *added*; as appears in the paraphrase. And the apostle's argument will be much better supported by referring this to Moses, who was particularly authorised by the Jewish people, as well as constituted by God, to *mediate* in the affair of receiving the *law* which he transacted once for all.—It is so unusual and unnatural a manner of speaking, to call a *succession* of men *a mediator*, that one would not willingly be forced on such an inconvenient interpretation.

SECT. VI.

of his office is to transact for both: *but God is* only *one* party in that covenant made with Abraham of which we have been speaking,[f] and Abraham and his seed, including all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are the other. As Moses therefore, when the law was given, stood at that time between the Lord and Israel (Deut. v. 5.) and did not pass between the whole collective body of Abraham's seed and the blessed God; so nothing was transacted by him with relation to those for whom he did not appear; and consequently nothing in that covenant wherein he did mediate could disannul the promise, or affect the right accruing to any from a prior engagement, in which the Gentiles were concerned as well as the Israelites: for no covenant can be altered but by the mutual consent of both parties; and in what was done at mount Sinai by the mediation of Moses, there was none to appear for the Gentiles; so that this transaction between God and the Israelites could have no force to abrogate the promise which extended likewise to the Gentiles, or to vacate a covenant that was made between parties of which one only was there.

Gal. iii. 20.

of one; but God is one.

21 And shall it now be said, [*Is*] *the law then against the promises of God?* And so far as the law takes place with regard to those who are under it, doth it not seem at least to implead in some measure, and to infringe upon that better state in which they who are brought into sub-

21 *Is* the law then against the promises

[f] *A mediator is not* [*the mediator*] *of one, but God is one.*] I have followed Mr. Locke's interpretation of this difficult passage, not without attentively comparing a variety of others. The learned Dr. Jenkins (in his Remarks on Four Books, p. 136.) interprets it, "This mediator is *not a me-*"*diator of one and the same covenant* with "the former; *but God is still one and the* "*same*, an unchangeable Being, who will "therefore adhere faithfully to his prior "engagements." But this changing the sense of the word *one*, and putting so unusual an interpretation upon it, is a difficulty one would choose, if possible, to avoid.—Nor can it be understood as if it were said, "Where *a mediator* is appoint-"ed to interpose his office, it is a sign *the parties are at variance*;" but God is now *reconciled*; for neither does it appear that there was any controversy between God and Israel when Moses was appointed *a mediator*; nor does God's *being one* properly signify *being at peace*. I shall mention but one other explication, which makes the sense of it as if it had been said, "Moses is *not a mediator in*[g] *of the* "*one seed*, to whom the promise was "made; and therefore could not act so "as to give up *his right*, or that of the "persons whose guardian and represen-"tative he was." But this would suppose a very unwarrantable change in the signification of *one* when applied to God, and takes it for granted, I think very unreasonably, that Christ was not concerned in giving the *law* from mount Sinai.

SECT. VI.

Gal. III. 21

of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

jection to it, would otherwise have been? *God forbid*, that we should insinuate any thing of that kind! On the contrary, it was intended to be subservient to the promise, and the design of it in its remoter consequences, if rightly attended to and applied, was to lead the thoughts and hearts of those who are under it to an higher and better dispensation. *For if* indeed *there had been a law given, which could have given life*, if any law, considered in itself alone, could have been to sinful creatures a sufficient means of justification and eternal happiness, then *assuredly righteousness should have been by the* Mosaic *law*,[s] than which there is not any law more holy, excellent, and good. *But* so far is the law from introducing any justifying righteousness, that *the scripture* in revealing it *hath* plainly *shut up all*, both Jews and Gentiles, *under sin*, as so many condemned malefactors; for it hath stated the rule of duty in such a manner, that every man's conscience must, on considering and understanding that rule, certainly charge himself with sin. And it is wisely ordered in this manner, that they who are so convinced of guilt and misery, might look beyond it to be delivered from their lost condition, and *that the promise* of righteousness and life *by faith in Jesus Christ*, as the only means of justification, *might be given* and appropriated *to them that* truly *believe* in him for pardon and salvation; and thus the seeming severity of the sentence was intended so much the more to illustrate the grace of the promise.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

22

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut

23

The law then, which condemns every transgression, was designed to be preparatory for the discovery which the gospel makes of the way of being justified by faith: *but before* this *faith came* to be exhibited, as the method of acceptance with God, *we* that were under the law stood on the foot of our own obedience before him; and having become obnoxious to Divine justice, and liable to death, the punishment of sin, *were kept under* the bond of *the law*, as condemned malefactors are guarded in close custody, *shut up* as

[s] *Righteousness should have been by the Mosaic law.*] This was *the law* by way of eminence, to which therefore God would have done that honour, if he would have done it to any.

SECT. VI

prisoners under sentence,[h] *unto the faith which* in due time *should afterwards be revealed*; there being no possibility of escape, till the Messiah came, and brought the happy tidings of a way to be justified and accepted, though we were before most justly condemned. *So that the*

Gal. III. 23.

up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 *law*, while it continued its authority over us, and held us under the rigour of its discipline, *was* as it were *our schoolmaster*, or the instructor of our childhood, to teach us our own sinfulness and the necessity of a better righteousness than our own; and so [*to lead us*] *unto Christ*, and to engage us, as condemned by the law, to have recourse to him who is the end of the law for righteousness, (Rom. x. 4;) *that we might* thus *be justified by faith* in him, and so obtain the benefit of the promise.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring* us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 *But when* this *faith* once *came* to be fully revealed by the gospel-dispensation, we then passed over to a more liberal and happy state; and being instructed in the knowledge of Christ, *we are no longer under* the discipline of *a schoolmaster* as children in a state of minority, and have no such need of the law, as we had formerly, to

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

26 direct us to him. *For* having believed in Christ, as he is discovered in the gospel, *ye are all*, without distinction, Gentiles as well as Jews, *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*,[i] and are now as it were brought into an adult state, in which you have a claim to higher privileges, and to greater freedom, than you had before.

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ*, and so have taken upon you the solemn profession of his religion, may thus be said to

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ,

[h] *Shut up* as prisoners under sentence.] The apostle having shewn in the preceding verse, that *all* were *shut up under sin*, what he now adds of the Jews being *shut up*, does not so much refer to the *fatigue* of *ceremonies* (though some have explained it so,) as to the *condemnation* under which the violation of *the law* brought the transgressors of it; according to the grand argument so largely insisted upon by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chap. iii. 9—23.

[i] *The sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*] It may perhaps be *objected*, "We "might have been the *children* or the *sons* "*of God*, though we had still continued "under a *schoolmaster*:" but we should not then have appeared under the character of such, as the apostle argues in the beginning of the next chapter. But perhaps the particle γαρ may here signify *now*; and so it may introduce the following application of the premises laid down in more general terms.—It seems that παιδαγωγος here signifies such a *master* or *governor* as hath a power of restraining and correcting children in a manner that suits only an infant state, or that of early childhood.

have put on Christ.

have put on Christ,[k] and to be clothed with his character and covered with his righteousness; and by the interest you have in him by faith, are so united to him as to appear one with him in his state of liberty and felicity. So that now the distinctions, which were before so much regarded, are in a manner done away, and have an end put to them, by this happy union: and *there is neither Jew nor Greek*, but the latter has the same privileges with the former, and the former may without offending God use the same freedom in approaching to him with the latter: *there is neither bond nor free*, but slaves are now the Lord's free men, and freemen the Lords servants; and this consideration makes the free humble, and the slave cheerful, and swallows up in a great measure the sense of his servitude: *there is neither male nor female*, but all are now admitted to that initiatory ordinance of baptism which comes in the place of circumcision that was appropriated to the males; and this happy state of equality, into which, with respect to spiritual privileges, both sexes are brought, may justly prevent that tyranny over the weaker which in some places hath so shamefully prevailed: *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*, and are all equally accepted in him; and being made one body in him, believers, of whatever nation, or sex, or condition they be, are all cemented in the bonds of holy friendship, and animated with the views of the same happiness. *And if ye* [*be*] *Christ's*, and are by faith united to him, who is the promised Seed, in whom all nations shall be blessed, *then are ye the* true *seed of Abraham*, and equally are so, whether ye are circumcised or not; *and*, in consequence of this, ye are *heirs in virtue of the promise*, and may look upon the best blessings promised to that holy patriarch as your own, though you have no inheritance in the land of Canaan, and pretend to claim nothing by virtue of a natural descent.

SECT. VI.

Gal. III. 27.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

28

29 And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

29

[k] *Have put on Christ.*] Mr. Locke here observes, that by their *putting on Christ* it is implied, "that to God, now looking "on them, there appears *nothing but* "*Christ*: They are, as it were, covered "all over with him as a man is with the "clothes he has put on. And hence, in "the next verse, it is said, they *are all* "*one in Christ Jesus*, as if they were but "that *one person*."

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VI. LET us rejoice in those spiritual privileges to which all true Christians are now equally entitled; and charge our souls with those obligations which necessarily attend them. Let us look
Ver. 26. upon ourselves as *the children of Abraham*, as entitled to the
29 noblest of those *promises* which God made to that excellent saint; even to that great and comprehensive promise, (which is *all the salvation*, and *all the desire*, of every true *child* of *Abraham*,) namely, that *God will be a God to us* (Gen. xvii. 7, 8.) Let us approve ourselves his genuine offspring by imitating his
27 faith; and always remember that, having been baptized into Christ, we have so put on Christ, as to be obliged to resemble him in his temper and character.

28 If we desire to share the blessings and glories of that one body of which Christ is the great and glorious Head, let us not lay a disproportionate stress upon any thing by which one Christian may be distinguished from another; but endeavour, as one in Christ Jesus, to be one in affection and friendship to each other: and let those who seem to have the greatest advantages condescend to them that seem most their inferiors.

21 Giving up all expectations of life from any law, since that of Moses could not give it, let us look for *glory, honour, and immortality* by the *gospel;* and be very thankful for the knowledge
20 we have of *the Mediator of a better covenant* than that in which Moses was appointed to mediate. And as *the law* was given,
17 *not to disannul the covenant of promise*, but with a view to be subservient to it, and to point out Christ, let us apply to him
16 for righteousness and life; and in him as that one Seed of Abraham in whom all the families, all the nations of believers were to be blessed, let us centre our hopes, and be very solicitous that we by faith may be united to him, and so may have a claim to all the privileges of the promise under him.

24 Thus let us continue to make use of the law, not as the foundation of our hope towards God, but as our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ by the discovery it has given of our need of him:
22, 23 and, being sensible that it hath shut up all under sin, from which we cannot be delivered but by the faith the gospel hath revealed, may we be led to seek the benefit of the promise, that, being *the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, we may be *heirs* of eternal life and blessedness.

SECT. VII.

The apostle illustrates the superior excellency and freedom of the state into which believers as the sons of God are brought by the gospel, above the state which they were in before under the law, when they were only as minors under a rigorous tutor: and at the same time he reproves the Galatians, that they were no more resolute in adhering to that better dispensation, the first tidings of which they had received from him with so much affection. Gal. IV. 1—20.

GALATIANS IV. 1.

GAL. IV. 1. NOW I say, *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

I OBSERVED to you, my friends, a little before, that while we were under the law, we were as in a state of minority; (chap. iii. 24, 25.) *Now*, for the further illustration of that thought, by what is known to be the usual method of dealing with children, *I say*, [*that*] *so long as the heir* of the most plentiful estate *is a child* in his non-age, *he*, with respect to the possession and free use of it, and to the right of managing it in his own person, *differeth nothing from a servant* or bond-man, *though he be* in title and by right of inheritance *lord of all: But* during his minority he *is under* the authority and restraint of *governors and guardians*, to whose tutorage and management he is committed, *till the time appointed by the father* when he shall be deemed of age, and be at liberty to manage his affairs himself. *So likewise we* who, having been Jews before, have now embraced the faith of the gospel, *when we were* but as *children* in minority, though we had the promise and hope of the Messiah, *were* held *in bondage under* the discipline of the law; in which we were employed, in a way suited to the imperfect circumstances of an infant-state, about *worldly elements*,[a] or about those inferior things which are but like the letters of the alphabet when compared with that sublime sense which they may be the means of teaching, when their power

SECT. VII. Gal. IV. 1.

2 But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

[a] *Worldly elements.*] The Jewish rituals might be so called, not only on account of the relation which they had to *worldly things*, by which they were adapted to the low conceptions of children, who are most affected with sensible objects, and have no taste for spiritual and heavenly things; but also, because the same kind of things had before obtained in the world, and were in use among the heathens, though under the Mosaic law they were directed to a better object and end.—Some would consider it as referring to the unfitness of the Israelites, in the infancy of their commonwealth, for receiving a more rational and sublime plan of religion, having been used in Egypt to so many pompous ceremonies.

SECT. VII.

Gal. IV. 4.

is duly understood, and the use of them become familiar to the mind: *But when the fulness of the time*, which had been marked out by the prophets for the accomplishment of this great event, *was come*, and we were arrived at the age appointed by our Father for entering upon our adult state, *God sent forth his* own *Son*, to give us the inheritance of the promise he had made of pardon and salvation, and bring us to a state of liberty and happiness. For to this end it was that the Messiah came; and that he might effect this grand design, he was pleased indeed to appear in a most humble form, taking upon him mortal flesh, *made* of the substance *of a woman*, according to the great original promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) and was thus *made under the* discipline of the Mosaic *law* in all its rigour; *That* so by his submitting, not only to the precepts of the law, but likewise to the penalty and curse of it, *he might redeem them who were under* the yoke and curse of *the law*, and bring us into an happy liberty, both from the sentence of it, and from any future obligation to obey the ceremonial part of it; *that*, instead of that servile spirit which the law breathed, *we might* all, as believers in Christ, *receive the adoption of sons*, and see and know the happy privilege to which we are advanced in consequence of it.

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 For unto all who are partakers of it, it is attended with the most joyful and beneficial effects; *and because ye are* thus admitted by the gospel to the full character and dignity of his *sons*, *God hath* graciously *sent forth* an abundant effusion of *the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, O ye believing Galatians, as well as into the hearts of the Jewish converts, *crying*, *Abba*, *Father*;[b] giving us all, both Jews and Gentiles, in our different languages, an equal freedom in addressing ourselves to him with the overflowings of filial confidence and love.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 *So that* now, O Christian, whatever be thy rank or station, or whether thou be Jew or Gen-

7 Wherefore thou

[b] *Crying, Abba, Father.*] The learned Mr. Selden (de succ. in Bonna Def. cap. iv.) hath brought a very pertinent quotation from the Babylonian Gemara, to prove that it was not allowed to *slaves* to use the title of *Abba* in addressing the *master* of the family to which they belonged, or the correspondent title of *Imma*, or *mother*, when speaking to the *mistress* of it.

art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

tile, *thou art no longer* to look upon thyself as *a servant* or bond-man, or as standing on a level with such an one in point of present enjoyment; *but*, on the contrary, as admitted to the liberty and freedom of *a son* at age: *and if* thou art indeed *a son* in such circumstances, *then* it follows by an happy consequence, that thou art *an heir* of all the promises *of God through Christ*, and hast a claim to God himself, as to thy father and thy portion. SECT. VII. Gal. IV. 7.

8 Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

But if this was the case with the Jewish converts, that they were in a state of servitude while they continued under the law, the bondage of the Gentiles in their unregenerate state must have been greatly worse; and it is still more absurd and unreasonable as to you Gentile converts, that when you have been called into a glorious liberty by the gospel, you should not entertain such liberal sentiments as are suited to it, but should be willing to submit to another servitude: *for then indeed, when ye knew not* the only true *God* and the way of being accepted with him, *ye were in bondage to those* stupid idols *which by nature are no gods*;[c] and greatly were your rational natures debased by so ignoble and absurd a service. 8

9 But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly

But now, after that ye have known the mind and will of *God, or rather are* so happy as to be *known of God*, and he has shewn his favour to you, and brought you to the knowledge of himself by the instruction of his word, and by the influence of his Spirit, *how turn ye again* into another kind of servitude *to the weak and poor elements* of the Mosaic ceremonies,[d] which are so far beneath that glori- 9

[c] *Ye were in bondage to those which by nature are no gods.*] It is evident here, that though these Christians had before their conversion been idolatrous Gentiles, the Judaizing teachers were desirous of subjecting them to the Mosaic ceremonies: from whence it appears how much those learned writers are mistaken who think the Jews only imposed these ceremonies on those who were already, as they affect to call them, *Proselytes of the gate*, or worshippers of the true God; and how vain is the attempt to prove from hence, that the injunction of abstaining from blood is to be considered as peculiar to them.

[d] *Weak and poor elements.*] The ceremonies of the law were *weak*, as they had no sufficient power to cleanse the soul from sin, and justify the sinner in the sight of God; and *poor*, as they could not confer the spiritual riches of the gospel, pardon and peace, and the assurance of enjoying life and happiness. Besides which it is to be remembered, that those who were most zealous for imposing the observance of the Mosaic ceremonies on the Gentile converts, were of the sect of the Pharisees, (Acts xv. 5.) who therefore would not fail to impose a great many additional observances, taught only by the tradition of the elders; which may sufficiently account for the low terms which the apostle uses upon this occasion. Compare Rom. viii. 3; and Heb. vii. 18.

SECT. VII.

ous and happy state into which ye are called? Elements, *to which ye* unaccountably *desire again to be in bondage anew*,[e] changing indeed the form and object of your ceremonies, but retaining many of the same low, perplexing, and unprofitable observances. For as under heathenism you had your frequent feasts in honour of imaginary deities, so now *ye observe* the Jewish solemnities with as scrupulous an exactness; even your sabbath *days*, *and* the beginning of your *months* or new moons, *and* your *times* of grand festivals, *and* your sabbatical *years*, and those of jubilee. Indeed, my brethren, when I think of these things, *I am afraid of you*, *lest* it should be found that *I have bestowed upon you so much affectionate labour in vain*,[f] while, after all the pains that I have taken to instruct you in the faith and liberty of the gospel, you appear to act as if you had forgotten what I taught you, and would be seeking justification from the law.

Gal. IV. 9.

elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

12 Give me leave, *brethren*, while *I* am thus expostulating with you and reproving you, most earnestly to *beseech you* with all tenderness, that ye *be as I* [*am*;] that ye maintain the same affectionate regard for me as I bear towards you; and that ye candidly receive those sentiments, which I, to whose authority in the church ye can be no strangers, have been inculcating upon you. And this I may the rather expect, from what I have experienced in myself; *for* it is well known there was a time when *I* [*was*] *as ye* [*are*,] as much bigoted to the Mosaic rituals and Pharisaic traditions as any of you all can be:[g]

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be as I *am*; for I *am* as ye *are*:

[e] *Ye desire again to be in bondage anew.*] It is certain they could not be said *to be in bondage* to the Jewish ceremonies *anew* who had never been acquainted with them; but it was *a bondage* in some measure *of the same kind*; and that is all that can be intended here.—I cannot think ἀνωθεν should be rendered *from above*; as if the meaning were, they had received such notice or demands from Jerusalem.

[f] *I am afraid of you*, &c.] Some have observed, there was the greater reason for this apprehension, as the fixing the time of the Jewish feasts depended upon the grand sanhedrim; so that their observing them would bring them into such an intercourse with and dependence upon that court as might be greatly to the hazard of their Christianity.

[g] *I* [*was*] *as ye* [*are*,] &c.] The words κἀγω ὡς ὑμεις are ambiguous, and may either signify, *I was*, or *I am as ye are*. Our translation takes them in the latter sense; and then it must express *his unanimity* with them, which he urges as an argument for *their unanimity* with him, and affection to him. And as this suits the connection with the latter part of the verse, I have expressed that sense in the paraphrase; though the former seems

ye have not injured me at all.

but God hath now taught me better; and that your hearts may also feel the power of his grace, and every prejudice may be subdued and rooted out, I am solicitous that the purity of that truth which I have learnt in so extraordinary a manner, and which I have faithfully preached among you, may continue with you. Remember too, that I am Paul your apostle and your friend, for whom you have formerly expressed the highest affection; and as, whatever instability you may have shewn as to some important doctrines which I taught you, *ye have not* personally *injured me at all*, I can have no ill-will to you, nor any inclination to find fault with you on my own account. SECT. VII. Gal. IV. 12

13 Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

13 *But*, whatever change may be in you, I still retain the same affectionate regard I manifested for you at my first coming to you, when I was treated by you with the greatest respect, and you esteemed yourselves happy under my ministry, notwithstanding all the disadvantages that attended it: for *ye* well *know that I preached the gospel among you at first*, when ye were entire strangers to the happy contents of it, *in the infirmity of the flesh*, and indeed with a great mixture of weakness in my manner of expressing myself; which was the consequence of that disorder in the whole system of my nerves, that was occasioned by the revelations I had the honour to receive some time before I came among you:

14 And my temptation which was in

14 *And* yet with respect to this *my temptation that was* seated *in my flesh*[h] (for a temptation indeed

preferable, as more weighty, copious, and striking, and indeed I think more natural too; for it is certain many of them were much prejudiced against him (chap. i. 6; iv. 16,) while he was most tenderly affected towards them.

[h] *My temptation that was in my flesh.*] What the apostle here refers to must have been so well known to the Galatians, that it was needless he should give a particular description of it in his writing to them.—Dr. Hammond and others explain it, of the persecutions which he suffered for preaching the gospel; but these could be no cause why the Galatians should despise him, and were so far from making him contemptible, that they must rather be an inducement to their receiving him with more respect, when he could bear such sufferings in vindication of the doctrine he delivered.—The apostle speaks of it as an *infirmity* and *temptation* seated *in his flesh*, which by the effect it had upon him might render both his person and his speech obnoxious to contempt, and have a tendency to make him despicable in the eyes of others; agreeable to which he elsewhere mentions it as objected to him, that *his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible*, (2 Cor. x. 10.) and, on the whole, there seems to be so manifest a resemblance between his representing *this temptation as in his flesh*, and what he says of *the thorn in the flesh*, that was given to *humble him* after *the abundance of his revelations*, (2 Cor. xii. 7,) that I can

SECT. VII.

it was, and sometimes threw me into greater anxiety than it ought to have occasioned,) I had however the consolation to see, that *you did not* Gal. IV. 14 *despise* it, *or reject* [*me*] *with scorn* on account of it; *but*, on the contrary, struck with the importance of my message and those evident proofs of a Divine co-operation that attended it, ye *received me as* if I had been *an angel of God* come down from heaven to you, [*yea*] with *as* much affection and submission as it can be supposed you would have shewn to our Divine master *Christ Jesus* himself, if, instead of sending me as his messenger and ambassador, he had

my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

15 visited you in person. *What was then your felicity?*[1] and how great was the sense you had of your happiness, upon your first receiving the glad tidings of the gospel from me, when such a change was made in your state, and your hearts were under the impulse of such holy affections, as that you could not but congratulate yourselves and me upon it? You cannot surely have forgot it; *for I bear you witness, that if* [*it had been*] *possible* you could have done it, and I could have received any benefit by it, *you would* even *have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me*, as a convincing proof of your affec-

15 Where is then the blessedness you spake of? for I bear you record that, if *it had been* possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.

16 tion for me. And why should there now be such a change in your disposition towards me? *Am I therefore become your enemy*, or have you any reason to account me such, unless it be *because I tell you the truth*, and bear a faithful testimony to the uncorrupted gospel which I desire to maintain among you in all the purity in which I planted it?

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

see no room to scruple why we may not take it for an effect of that memorable circumstance which must have happened some time before his preaching first to the Galatians, and was attended with such consequences as might still be discernible in him, since it was *not removed* on his desire to be delivered from it. See note [f], on 2 Cor. xii. 7, Vol. IV. p. 472.

[1] [*What was then your felicity?*] Some think that St. Paul here refers to the high things which they spake of *himself*, and to their *blessing him* for what he taught them; and Mr. Locke would have it, that the sense of this clause must be, "What "benedictions did you then pour out up-"on me?" But however this would be the consequence of their *accounting themselves happy* in having him for their apostle, and being instructed in the gospel by him, that upon this they would be *heaping blessings on him*, in testimony of the high regard which they had for him; it does not suit so well with the original, which rather is expressive of the sense they had of *their own happiness* in being enlightened by him in the knowledge of the gospel; for such appears to be the proper meaning of the words μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν. Compare Rom. iv. 6, 9.

SECT. VII.

Gal. IV. 17.

17 They zealously affect you, *but* not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them.

I do not indeed impute this alienation of affection wholly to yourselves; for I know that a great many dishonest artifices have been used to prejudice your minds against me, and there are those among you who would endeavour to persuade you that *they zealously affect you*, and have an extraordinary concern for your welfare, [*but*] are not upright and sincere, and what they aim at is *not well*, as they are seeking to subvert the truth, and to seduce and draw you off to their own sentiments; *yea, they would* quite exclude and *shut us out* from any share in your regards,[k] *that ye may zealously affect* and be attached to *them*, and, having engrossed you to themselves, they may thus have an opportunity of promoting their own secular views at your expence.

18 But *it is* good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

But it is fit you should remember, 18 that [*it is*] *good* for you *to be zealously affected always in that which is good*:[l] for as the beauty and excellence of zeal is to be estimated, not by the degree of it considered in itself, but by the object to which it is directed; so too the warmth of your affection towards an object truly worthy of it should be at all times equally maintained; *and* the same fervent zeal which you have formerly expressed, ought to be manifested by you, *not only when I am present with you*, but in my absence too, if you really think me to deserve your regards, and have indeed received the truth in the love of it.

19 My little children, of whom I tra-

What shall I say to you, *my* dear *little children, of whom* I hope I had begotten you in Christ Jesus through the gospel? (1 Cor. iv. 15.) I am in great anxiety of heart concerning you, and am so earnestly solicitous you may be found 19

[k] *They would shut us out.*] Though most copies read it εκκλεισαι ὑμας the sense appears more natural and easy, if we read *us* rather than *you*; and as there is no doubt but the apostle here refers to the endeavours used by their false teachers to alienate their affections from himself, it may induce us to prefer this reading, which has the countenance of some copies, and upon this account is put by our translators in the margin.

[l] *To be zealously affected always in that which is good.*] Εν καλῳ either may refer to a *good person*, or a *good thing*, and may be understood of their continuing *zealous* in their affection, either to *himself*, or to *the truth* that he had preached. But as the apostle had been speaking of himself in the foregoing verses, he likewise seems to have still in view the warmth of their affection to him, when he was present with them; though he expresses it in a graceful way, with such a latitude, as may include their zeal for his doctrine, as well as for his person; and I have chosen, therefore, not to limit it to either in the translation.

SECT. VII.

to have received the grace of God in truth, that I declare, with all the undissembled tenderness of a most affectionate parent, *I travail* as it were *in birth again*, and am in pangs about you, *till Christ be* fully *formed in you*, and I have the happiness to see clear evidences of the prevalence of true Christianity in all its branches in you, by which it may appear you are renewed after the image of Christ, and are really brought to a life of faith in him. But since I find you have lost so much by my absence, and have unhappily been set upon by those who have took the opportunity of it to practise upon you, *I could* heartily *wish to be present with you* even *now*, *and* to see cause *to change my voice* towards you, so as to speak to you in terms of greater confidence, assurance, and complacency, than I now can; *for* indeed *I am in* great *doubt* and in much perplexity *about you*; and though I do not absolutely despair of your recovery and establishment, yet I am not without very discouraging apprehensions lest, after all the pains that I have taken with you, the good effects of my labours among you should in a great measure be lost.

Gal. IV. 19. travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,

20 I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1, 2 As the church in general was in its minority till the full revelation of the gospel came, so is every true member of it a minor while he continues in this world, and is in many instances inferior to some who have no part in the inheritance; but the time will come when, as an heir who is deemed of age, he shall be admitted into full possession; and it will amply and immediately repay all the abasements and mortifications of that state in which the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father hath at present placed us.

4, 5 The grand foundation of this hope is that infinite love which we can never sufficiently acknowledge and admire, even the love of God our Father, in *sending forth his Son* at the appointed time, *made of a woman*, and *made under the law*, subject at once both to its precepts and its penalty, *to redeem us* when we were under its condemning sentence, and to introduce us to all the privileges of that Divine adoption which we receive from him. May each of us, in consequence of it, receive more and more of that *spirit of adoption* whereby we may be enabled to raise our souls to God, with all the holy overflowings of genuine filial

affection, while we daily cry, *Abba, Father*, "Send forth, O God, SECT. VII.
"this *Spirit of thy Son in our hearts*, whatever worldly benefits
"and delights thou mayest deny us; that we may thus rejoice Ver. 6.
"in the assurance that we are *heirs of God through Christ*, and 7
"may be able to glory in this, that *the Lord is our inheritance!*"

If we thus know God, being delivered from the bondage of 7
corruption, and from those idolatrous regards to the creature to which our hearts are naturally so inclined; let us acknowledge that it is because we rather have been known of him, and being apprehended by his grace, he hath received us into the number of his sons, and given us the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Let us act suitably to such a character, and be solicitous to maintain the purity of that religion by which we are brought to such exalted dignities and hopes. And let our hearts be al- 14
ways open to receive the truth in the love of it; not despising
the infirmities of those that preach the gospel to us in faithful-
ness, nor allowing ourselves at any time to look upon them as
our enemies, for the plainness with which they may tell us the 16
truth; which is sometimes the case with regard to those who might once have been ready, in the forwardness of their zeal and affection, almost to have plucked out their own eyes for ministers 15
whom they afterwards slight and forsake.

Let us labour after a steadiness in our temper and conduct, 18
and take heed that our zeal be so guided as that it may centre upon objects truly good, and may continue to act in proportion to their excellency, always suspecting those principles and those persons who would alienate our hearts from any of the faithful 17
servants of Christ, because they do not agree with our senti-
ments about the circumstantials of religion.

Such as the apostle Paul expresses here with so much tender- 19, 20
ness will be the desires of every faithful minister for the spiritual children which God hath given him; and where he sees reason to stand in doubt of any of whom he had once good hopes through grace, lest perhaps he should have bestowed upon them 11
labour in vain, it will give him a deep and a tender distress, and he will, as it were, *travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in them.* His very heart will be in pain for this: and what can be a greater or more worthy object of desire? O that it might appear that Christ is formed in the very souls of all that are called by his name! So would ministers have a firm foundation of joy in them, and they of hope towards God for that eternal happiness which can only be built upon Christ; upon *Christ formed in them*, as the only well grounded *hope of glory* (Col. i. 27.)

SECT. VIII.

The apostle illustrates the subject of his foregoing discourse by an allegory borrowed from what is written of Sarah and Hagar, and their respective seed. Gal. IV. 21, *to the end.* V. 1.

GALATIANS IV. 21.

SECT. VIII.

Gal. IV. 21.

I HAVE been saying a great deal to take you off from any further thoughts of becoming subject to the Mosaic law: but if you still have any inclination to it, *tell me* now, *ye who are desirous of being under the law, do ye not hear* and call to mind what is said in the book of *the law* itself, which is so often read in your assemblies? There is a passage even in the first book of that sacred volume, which is very capable of being improved to your instruction, if you
22 rightly enter into it. *For it is written* there, (Gen. xvi. 15, and xxi. 2, 3,) *that Abraham*, the great patriarch, in a descent from whom so many are ready to glory, *had two sons*, who, though equally related to him, were by no means equal with regard to the blessings which they were to inherit: *the one* of these he had *by* Hagar *a bond-woman, and the other by* Sarah *a free-woman*, whose name signifies a Lady or Princess, and so may be understood as import-
23 ing not only liberty, but authority. *But* there was a great difference between them; for *he* [*who was born*] *of* Hagar *the bond-woman*, that is, Ishmael, *was born* only *according to the flesh*, and produced in the common order of nature, without any particular promise of God, or any unusual interposition of his power and providence; *whereas he* [*who was born*] *of* Sarah *the free-woman*, that is, Isaac, [*was born*] *by virtue of the promise*, when his parents were in the course of nature absolutely incapable of producing a child; and upon him the peculiar blessings of the Divine promise were entailed.

24 Now I would lead you to an evangelical improvement of this remarkable and mystical fact; *which* contains many concurrent circumstances, so nearly resembling what we now observe with regard to the Jewish and Christian

GAL. IV. 21.

TELL me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

23 But he *who was* of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free-woman *was* by promise.

24 Which things

are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

religion, and the professors of both, that I cannot but propose them to you as *things* that *may be* profitably *allegorized*. *For these* two persons (Hagar and Sarah) *are*, that is, may well be considered as representing, *the two* celebrated *covenants*, or the two dispensations of the law and gospel, the tenor of which is so different; *the one* that was delivered *from mount Sinai*, is that *which bringeth forth her children to bondage, which is Hagar*, whose servile disposition and state may be considered as an emblem of that less ingenuous dispensation. *This Hagar*, 25 *I say*, whose name signifies a rock, *is* a representation of those who are under the law given from *mount Sinai in Arabia*,[a] in the deserts of which the Hagarenes who descended from Ishmael were settled; *and* it *answers* in the allegory *to the present* state of the earthly *Jerusalem*, *which with her children is in* a state of *bondage*, as being in subjection to so many ritual observances, and under a sentence of wrath on the commission of the least wilful offence, which hath the greatest tendency to produce a mean and disingenuous fear. *But the Jerusalem* 26 *above*, or that celestial society to which all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles, are come, and are united, under the new and better dispensation of the gospel-covenant, *is the free woman*, answering to Sarah in the superior character and state to *which* it introduces us, and *is* indeed *the mother of us all*;[b] to whom we as Christians do all belong, and by virtue of our relation to whom we not only are at present in a more liberal and happy condition, but become heirs,

SECT. VIII. Gal. IV. 24.

25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children:

26 But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.

[a] *This Hagar, I say*, &c.] The particle γαρ cannot here have its *illative* force, since it would be very injurious to the apostle to suppose he meant to argue thus, *Mount Sinai is Hagar—for this Hagar is Mount Sinai*. It must therefore here signify the same with *I say*, and only introduce the repetition of a thought which the apostle was desirous to inculcate; as it often does elsewhere. Compare Rom. iii. 2, and xv. 27.

[b] *Jerusalem above is the free-woman, which is the mother of us all*.] Some have thought the apostle here suggests an argument to prove the *liberty* of the *Christian church* from the *great number* of its *converts*, which would have rendered the observation of many of the Mosaic precepts impossible: but that intimation, if intended, must have been very obscure. It is more reasonable to conclude that he refers to the *free genius* of Christianity, which, when compared with Judaism, is extremely obvious, and made it evidently fit, in the illustration of this allegory, to consider *the free woman*, that is, Sarah, as representing the *church* under this nobler form.

SECT. VIII.

as Isaac was, of the promises which God was pleased to make to our father Abraham.

Gal. IV. 27.

And there is a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which may naturally suggest such a thought: *for it is written* there,[e] with reference to the greater freedom and enlargement of the church in the times of the Messiah, (Isa. liv. 1.) "*Rejoice*, and be exceeding glad, *thou barren*, "*who* for a long time *didst not bear; break* "*forth* into singing, *and cry* aloud for joy, "*thou who didst not travail in birth: for* such "is now thy happy state, that *many more are* "*the children of the desolate than of her who had* "*an husband*." The children of the Christian church, the spiritual seed of the true Sarah, shall (as the prophet there suggests) be abundantly more numerous than those of the Jewish ever were; and what we see at present of its enlargement and prosperity may encourage our faith in the promises relating to its yet more

27 For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

[e] *For it is written.*] Mr. Pierce has a learned and ingenious dissertation (at the end of his paraphrase on the Philippians) to prove that the apostle here asserts that Isaiah, in the passage he quotes from his prophecy, points out the allegorical correspondence between the Christian church and Sarah, on which he had been insisting in this section: and accordingly this critic renders those words in ver. 24. ἅτινα ἐστὶ ἀλληγορούμενα *which things are allegorized*, that is, are actually turned to this sense by the prophet; who, (as he says,) calls out, in this livth chapter, to some *woman* celebrated for *having children* after long *barrenness*, to shew that something *like this* should happen after the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, which had been foretold in the liiid. And having observed that no person mentioned in the Old Testament can so properly be addressed in such language as Sarah, who in respect of *children* might be called *desolate*, whereas Hagar was *the married wife* and *mother*, he thinks it reasonable to conclude from hence, that she was referred to by Isaiah, as St. Paul, according to him asserts in this text.—But, not to insist on the impropriety of giving Hagar, who was only a *slave* and a *concubine*, the character and title of *the married wife*, in opposition to Sarah, the principal *wife* and undoubted *mistress* of the family, I think the context in Isaiah, plainly shews that the prophet refers to the *future conversion* of the Jews, and the increase and prosperity of that happy nation after its long rejection, as far exceeding what it had known before in its most favoured state. (Isa. liv. 6, *&c. seq.*) And therefore I would choose to explain this passage in St. Paul, as an *allusion*, rather than an *argument*; which frees it from many objections and embarrassments to which it would otherwise have appeared liable.—If any should urge that *such glosses* are of little importance, it may be sufficient to reply, that they were much in the Jewish taste, and that we may assure ourselves that the apostles were preserved from any thing in them which was not perfectly agreeable to *the mind of the Spirit*.—On the whole, I entirely agree with Mr. Chandler, that this part of the epistle was not intended to *prove* Christianity, but to *illustrate* the different genius of *that* and Judaism, and to shew that not all the *carnal* descendants of Abraham, but the *spiritual* offspring only, were *heirs*, even according to the principles which the Jews themselves readily admitted. See Chandler, of Miracles, p. 345, 346. And Dr. Sykes's interpretation agrees with this. Compare Sykes on the Truth of Christianity, p. 198, 199.

universal spread and brighter glory in the latter day. SECT. VIII.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

Now, to apply what I have been saying to ourselves, *we, brethren, like Isaac, are the children* of Abraham, not according to the flesh, but as born of the Spirit in virtue *of the promise;* and so are heirs of the blessings of the covenant, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, in consequence of our believing in Christ, and being united to him, as the Seed in which it was declared that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Gal. IV. 28.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

But indeed the parallel holds farther still, in this respect; that *as then he who was born after the flesh*, that is, Ishmael, in whose production there was nothing beyond the common course of nature; mocked and derided, and so *persecuted him* [*who was born*] *after the Spirit*, that is, Isaac, who was produced as the spiritual seed by the special energy of God's miraculous power, *even so* [*it is*] *now;* the carnal Jews, who are the seed of Abraham after the flesh, abuse and persecute us Christians, who are Abraham's seed after the Spirit. 29

30 Nevertheless, what saith the scripture? Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman.

But what saith the scripture in regard to this? The oracle is correspondent to the case before us, for it there follows, (Gen. xxi. 10.) "*Cast out* "*the bond-woman and her* insolent *son; for the* "*son of the bond-woman shall not inherit with* "Isaac, *the son of the free-woman:*" which howsoever grievous it might seem to Abraham, when it was said by Sarah, yet God himself confirmed the sentence, and directed that it should be done: and in like manner also shall the rebellious Jews be treated, who notwithstanding their boasted descent from Abraham, shall be cast out of the church and family of God, and shall be visibly expelled and (as it were) turned out of doors by him, as the mocking Ishmael was, for insulting those whom God hath chosen for his covenant-children, and shall not be permitted to be heirs of the promise with them. 30

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.

So then, upon the whole, my *brethren, we* that believe in Christ *are not children of the bond-woman*, under subjection to the servile dispensation of the law; *but* we are children *of the free-woman*, and have the privilege of being 31

SECT. VIII.

called into a state of liberty under the spiritual covenant of the gospel. See to it, *therefore*, that you strenuously maintain the privilege and freedom you are called to, and, without yielding in the least to those who are endeavouring to seduce you to a subjection to the law, let me exhort you to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free:*[a] contend earnestly for the purity and honour of that religion which he hath established, *and be not* persuaded to be *entangled again with the yoke of bondage;* of which you appear to be in danger, from what I hear of your circumstances, and am informed of the temper of some among you.

Gal. V. 1.

Gal. V. 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 21. & seq.

LET us not allow ourselves to cavil at a passage like this that we have now been reading, but submit to the authority of this divinely-inspired interpreter, who we are sure was enabled to explain and improve scripture in such a manner as he, by whose Spirit it was dictated, knew to be most agreeable to its spiritual design.

Chap. iv. 31.

Let us bless God, that we are children of the free-woman; that we are so happy as to be called to so liberal and ingenuous a dispensation, and are not fettered with that yoke of bondage, or doomed to those servile terrors, which would have been so grievous, had we been left to them unsupported by the grace of the gospel, and which would so much have abated our comforts, had they been incorporated with the Christian dispensation.

27 Well may we rejoice to hear in prophecy of the glorious increase here promised to the church: let us be thankful that it hath in part been accomplished; and let it invigorate our prayers for the hastening that happy time, when *the desolate* shall *enlarge the place of her tents, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitations;* when she shall *lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes;* and, though long *afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,* she shall see *her pavement of fair colours, and her foundations of sapphires; her windows shall be made of agates, and her gates of carbuncles.* (Isa. liv. 1, 2, 11, 12.)

29 In the mean time, let us guard against the disingenuous temper of the son of the bond-woman, against every thing that may look

[a] *Therefore stand fast in the liberty* &c.] This exhortation is so evidently grounded on what the apostle had been saying just before, that it seems best to be connected with it, and I have therefore placed it at the end of this section. It is made the close of the fourth chapter in three of Stephens' copies; which seems to be more proper than to make it, as we generally do, the beginning of another chapter.

like persecuting our brethren. It is much better, if such be the will of God, that we should suffer ill usage from them; staying our souls upon the promises of God, which shall all be assuredly accomplished in their season. Yet may all this meekness and gentleness be exercised, in full consistency with that generous care to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, which we owe to ourselves, our brethren, and our children; and indeed owe to the honour of our common Christianity, and to the regard we should express to him who hath broken the yoke from our shoulders; who cannot be pleased to see us voluntarily entangling ourselves with it anew, or meanly lying down under the oppressive hands of those who in the abuse of his sacred name would presume again to bind it upon us.

SECT. VIII.

Chap. v. 1.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle urges them more resolutely to retain the doctrine of justification by Divine grace; and renews his caution against the efforts of those seducing teachers who had done so much to alienate their minds from it. Gal. V. 2—15.

GAL. V. 2.

BEHOLD, I Paul say unto you, That if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

GALATIANS V. 2.

I HAVE exhorted you, as children of the promise, and born, not of the bond-woman, but the free, to maintain your Christian liberty, and guard against the encroachments of those who would break in upon it. And I now plainly tell you, that I particularly mean those Judaizing teachers with whom the church is at present so much infested: in reference to whose tenets, *behold I, Paul*, whatever may have falsely been suggested of my favouring their sentiments and sometimes preaching circumcision, expressly *say unto you, That if ye*, who are by birth and education Gentiles, submit to *be circumcised*, with a dependence on the observation of those Jewish rites to which ye are thereby obliged for your justification before God,[a] *Christ shall profit you nothing*, and all that he hath done and suffered will be of no advantage to you: for if the whole

SECT. IX.

Gal. V. 2.

[a] *If ye be circumcised*, with a dependence on the observation, &c.] Common sense plainly requires to take the assertion with such limits; which is also necessary to reconcile it with the hopes of all Jewish believers, and with the conduct of St. Paul himself in circumcising Timothy, (Acts xvi. 3.) And this accounts for the indifference with which he elsewhere speaks of circumcision as availing nothing. See chap. v. 6; vi. 15; and 1 Cor. vii. 19.

SECT. IX.

confidence of the soul do not rest upon him for salvation, he will reject those divided regards which are offered to him, and interpret them as an affront rather than an acceptable homage.

Gal. V. 2.

3 *And I* repeat it as a point of the highest importance, which is agreeable to what I have always preached, and do now *testify again to every* particular *man* among you *who is circumcised*, in the view I have just been mentioning, with a dependence on that rite for justification, *that he is* thereby become *a debtor to do the whole law:* for as circumcision binds a man fully to observe all the other rituals of the Mosaic dispensation, so will the tenet which I now oppose leave you under the rigour of that covenant which required perfect and sinless obedience, and left every wilful transgressor under a curse, from which by the law he could never be delivered.

3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

4 It is therefore evident that *Christ is become of none effect to* such of *you*, but must have appeared and died in vain as to any benefit you would have by him, *whosoever of you are* seeking to be *justified by* the works of *the law;* yea by this means, whatever your profession may have been of a regard to Christ, *ye are* indeed *fallen from* the *grace* of the gospel, and have in effect renounced your expectations from it.

4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

5 *For we* who are true Christians, and have been savingly enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, do, *through* the influences of *the Spirit*, whose gifts and graces are so glorious a seal of the gospel, *wait for the hope of righteousness* and life, not on account of any claim or title we have to it by our obedience to the law, but *by* a sincere and operative *faith*, casting our souls on Christ as condemned creatures who have no hope in themselves, and trusting in the grace of God for justification through the redemption he has wrought.

5 For we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

6 And herein we act according to the true tenor of the gospel; *for in* the dispensation of grace by *Christ Jesus*, to those who would obtain salvation by him, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, and no man will either be saved or condemned for being or not being circumcised; *but* our interest in the blessings of the gospel depends upon a sincere *faith* in Christ, *which operates by* an unfeigned *love*

6 For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

to God and man,[b] and so engages us, from a principle of holy gratitude, to yield a sincere obedience to all the known will of God, renouncing any dependence on that obedience, how complete soever it may seem, as the meritorious cause of our acceptance with him.

SECT. IX. Gal. V. 6.

7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

This is true genuine Christianity, and you 7
once received it as such, and appeared to be under the influence of it: in regard to which I may say, *Ye did* once *run well* at your first setting out in the Christian race, and seemed to exert yourselves in a very happy manner; *who* then of late *has hindered you*[c] *from obeying the truth*, with that readiness and perseverance which might reasonably have been expected from so hopeful a beginning, and has turned you out of the way in which we were making so fair a progress? Of *this* I am sure, that 8
the *persuasion* you now seem to have entertained of the necessity of mixing Judaism with Christianity, and seeking justification in part at least, by Mosaical observances, [*comes*] *not from him that called you* into the profession of the gospel;[d] nor did I teach you any such lesson when I was made the happy instrument of bringing you to the Christian faith, but have largely and earnestly inculcated the contrary. There were indeed 9
some secret workings of this pernicious principle which I now oppose, that early became visible among you; and I find they have spread in such a manner, as to shew that *a little leaven*, if it be suffered to continue, operates unseen, till it diffuseth itself on every side, and *leaveneth the whole mass*. But having laid the matter thus 10
before you, and warned you of the danger of

8 This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you.

9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

10 I have confi-

[b] *Faith which operates by love.*] There is some degree of ambiguity in the original expression, δι' αγαπης ενεργουμενη, which is capable of being differently rendered, and may signify either *which operates* and works *by love*, or *which is wrought*, inspired, and perfected *by love*; which latter sense some have preferred, and have taken occasion from hence to shew how much *charity* tends to establish and perfect *faith*. But I prefer the more usual sense, which I think to be authorised by the use of the same word, Eph. iii. 20, and Col. i. 29.

[c] *Who hath hindered you?*] It hath been observed that ανεκοψε is an Olympic expression, answerable to εἰρεχεῖν; and it properly signifies *coming across the course* while a person is running in it, in such a manner as to *jostle* and to throw him out of the way.

[d] *From him that called you.*] This expression of *him that called* or *calleth you*, agrees with what he had used before, chap. i. 6; and in both places it would seem he means *himself*. See note [f], on that passage, sect. 1.

SECT. IX.

this leaven, with that fidelity and zeal which love to our souls and a regard to the honour of Christ requires, *I have* this *confidence in you through* the grace of *the Lord* Jesus, on whom I humbly depend for the influences of his Spirit, and to whose blessing I commit all my endeavours, *that ye will be no otherwise minded*, and entertain no other sentiments, as to what is necessary to your justification, than ye have been taught by me: *but he that troubleth you*, and would pervert your minds from the purity of the faith, *shall* certainly *bear* [*his*] *judgment* of deserved censure here, and, if he persist in his evil, of weighty condemnation hereafter, *whosoever he be*;[a] God will judge him at last for a conduct like this, and in the mean time he has reason to apprehend my animadverting upon him with that apostolical authority which some of my adversaries have found to their cost they were unable to resist. (Compare Acts xiii. 10, 11; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5; 2 Cor. x. 6, 8; xiii. 10; and 1 Tim. i. 20.)

Gal. v. 10

dence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you, shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

11 I know there are some who have insinuated, as if I myself favoured the very principles elsewhere which I so much oppose among you; *but I* leave it to you, my *brethren*, when you consider the treatment I have met with from these zealots, to judge if the contrary do not evidently appear. For *if I yet preach* the necessity of *circumcision*, and insist upon submitting to it in order to salvation, *why do I still suffer* such grievous *persecution*, as it is evident to the whole world I endure, by the malice of the Jews, who are every where endeavouring to raise, not only prejudices, but tumults against me? *Then* surely,

11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecu-

[a] *He that troubleth you shall bear* [*his*] *judgment, whosoever he be.*] Some think that the apostle here refers to *one particular man*, who was more forward than the rest, and had been chiefly instrumental in corrupting them; but by his adding at the close, *whosoever he be*, he seems to intend it as a *general* declaration; which best agrees with what follows in ver. 12, and what he elsewhere says in this epistle, where he speaks always of their *seducing teachers* in the *plural* number. (See chap. i. 7; iv. 17; vi. 13, 18.) And when he thus declares that *whosoever he be* that troubleth them he *shall bear his judgment*, though some would understand this only of the *censure* which the *church* should pass upon him, or of the *punishment* he should suffer when St. Paul came to exert his *apostolical authority*, of which we have several instances elsewhere, (see note [f], on 1 Cor. iv. 21, Vol. IV. p. 234;) yet it is reasonable to extend it to the solemn account he should give to God, and to the *condemnation* he should certainly receive if he persisted in the endeavours he was using to subvert the truth.

tion? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

if it be true that I agree with them on this head, *the offence* taken at the doctrine *of* salvation by *the cross* of Christ *is ceased;* and in effect I give up that which I have been so long contending for, and they have as eagerly been struggling against. But I am so far from agreeing with them, that *I could wish they were even cut off* entirely from the communion of the Christian church, and cast out of it as unworthy members, *who* thus unsettle your minds, and *disturb you,*[1] by so many false suggestions and irregular methods, as do indeed well deserve such a censure.

SECT. IX. Gal V. 11.

12 I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

12

This might be a means of restoring to the church that peace which is so agreeable to the principles of our common religion and calling; *for* it is manifest, my *brethren, ye have been called* by the gospel *to liberty* and freedom from the bondage of the Mosaic ceremonies; *only* see to it, that ye [*abuse*] *not* this *liberty for an occasion* of unwarrantable indulgence *to* any irregular appetites of *the flesh*, as if we were set free from the observance of the moral precepts of the law; and remember, that it is not only consistent with that liberty, *but* greatly subservient to it, that ye should look upon yourselves as bound, *by* the exercise of the most cordial mutual *love*, to *serve one another. For all the law* with which we Christians have any concern, so far as it relates to our fellow-creatures, *is fulfilled in* the observation of *one word* or precept, [*even*] *in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, and treat him, as in a change of circumstances thou wouldst reasonably expect and desire to be treated by him. *But if*, instead of cultivating these Christian and humane sentiments, *ye* indulge a fierce and savage disposition, so as to *bite and devour one another*, it will be necessary to *take heed, that ye be not de-*

13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

13

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

14

15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

15

[1] *I could wish they were even cut off who disturb you.*] It by no means agrees with the gentle genius of Christianity, to suppose that the apostle (who understood it so well, and cultivated it so much) should mean by this to intimate that he wished them *dead*, or wished that any *bodily evil* were inflicted upon them by *human* violence. All arguments therefore which are drawn from this text in favour of *persecuting principles* must be very inconclusive. But when we consider the particular circumstances in which these seducing teachers opposed the apostle, it will appear that they very well deserved that *ecclesiastical censure*, which, according to the paraphrase, he here wishes to be pronounced against them.

SECT. IX. *stroyed by one another*, as wild beasts sometimes worry one another till both are slain: at least it is certain, that by these mutual contentions you take the readiest way to disgrace, and so far as in you lies to overthrow, the religion to which you profess a regard.

Gal. V. 15.

IMPROVEMENT.

How awful is the supposition which the apostle makes, even with regard to those who had distinguished themselves by so zealous a profession; to those *before whose eyes Christ had been evidently set forth as crucified*, (chap. iii. 1.) and who would once have been ready to *have plucked out their own eyes* for the minister that preached him to them, (chap. iv. 15.) that he should speak of it with regard to such as a possible case, that on the whole *Christ might profit them nothing!* Let our souls dread the thought of being in the number of those to whom he should be thus unprofitable.

Ver. 2.

How heavy will our account be, and how dearly shall we pay for the amusements of the sublimest knowledge, or the most sanguine hopes we entertain, if this be the end of all! That we may none of us be so unhappy, let us be very careful that we
4 do not think of seeking justification by the law in such a manner as to fall from grace: but, as no right or title to it can be
5 obtained but by an interest in Christ, let us through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness and life, by faith in him. May the blessed Spirit of God form and support in our minds such an hope; which if it be thus formed, will never make us
7 ashamed. (Rom. v. 5.) Let us therefore be animated by it; and if at first we have run well, let us always consider the dispatch we may have made already in our Christian race, as an excitement to farther vigour, rather than an encouragement to indolence and sloth.

6 Let the Spirit which these and so many other parts of the New Testament breathe, teach us to moderate our zeal about circumcision and uncircumcision, about the rituals and externals of religion, and to cultivate more and more that faith which operates by love, and therefore will express itself *by keeping the com-*
13 *mandments of God.* This will engage us, by the best and most generous principles, *to serve one another*, in our truest interests, and to fulfil that royal law which is comprehended in this one
14 important word, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Surely we have not as yet attained to perfection in this excellent grace? sure there is room for new attainments, even in the best. But O, how lamentably deficient are the generality of Christians! yea rather, how scandalously and how fatally hath the opposite

principle prevailed! so that, instead of that mutual love, of which our gracious Redeemer was the great teacher and example, the contrary principle of hatred and malignity hath triumphed to such a degree, as to turn the church into a camp of warriors, or rather (as it may be called) into a theatre of wild beasts, where they have been worrying one another almost to death, yea in many instances biting and devouring one another, till they have actually been destroyed one by another. Let us take heed, after all the Christian and the protestant interest hath suffered by these fatal divisions, that we do not catch the contagion, and bear our part in so common, yet so pernicious a mischief. It is a spreading evil, and a little of this leaven often diffuses itself over the whole mass; but nothing is more manifest than that it is a persuasion, which is so far from coming of him that called us, that it is indeed the most direct violation of his distinguishing precept.

SECT. IX. Ver. 13.

9

8

Let us remember that the time will come, when he that troubleth the church, either in one way, by unscriptural impositions, to which the apostle here refers, or in another, by an unreasonable stiffness about things indifferent, will certainly bear his judgment, whosoever he be. Let us therefore rather choose to suffer persecution than to share in such guilt; and be continually praying for that Divine wisdom which may teach us so to bear afflictions as not to increase the offence of the cross, and so to stand fast in our liberty as not to abuse it for an occasion to gratify those irregular passions, which, to whatever high original they may pretend, are indeed to be traced no higher than a carnal principle, and to be numbered among the works of the flesh.

10

11

13

SECT. X.

He exhorts the Galatians to a conversation suitable to the dispensation of grace which they had received, and, warning them against the several vices of the flesh, recommends to them the habitual practice of the graces of the Spirit, and presses them in particular to purity, spirituality, and mutual love. Gal. V. 16, *to the end.*

GALATIANS V. 16.

GAL. V. 16.
THIS I say then, Walk in the Spirit,

I HAVE been cautioning you against that contentious temper which is so great a reproach to the professors of Christianity, and tends so much to the detriment of our common faith. *But*, that I may effectually guard you against this and every other evil, I have a charge to give you, and in one word *I say*, *Walk in the Spirit*, and at all times endeavour to conduct yourselves

SECT. X.

as under the influences of that blessed Agent, and in a way agreeable to the new nature he hath given you, *and* then *ye will not fulfil the lust of the flesh*; but notwithstanding the remainders of corruption in you, yet by his powerful suggestions, and by the gracious aids that you receive from him, you will be happily preserved from the predominancy of carnal and irregular appetites, so that the work of mortification, and all the exercises of true godliness, will daily become more and more easy and familar to you.

Gal. V. 16.

and *ye* shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 And this precaution is absolutely necessary in present circumstances, by reason of the continual contest that there is between the flesh and Spirit in the renewed soul: *for* while you are here in the body, *the flesh* is lusting on the one hand, and *hath desires contrary to* the motions and dictates of *the Spirit*[a], or of that gracious principle which is communicated by the Holy Spirit in his regenerating operations on the heart; *and*, on the other hand, *the Spirit* [*hath desires*] *contrary to* the appetites and inclinations of *the flesh*, or of that principle of corruption which is introduced by sin, and the remains of which are ready to exert their influence in the regenerate, *and these* two principles *are* directly *opposite to each other* both in their nature and their tendency; *so that*, upon the whole, *ye do not the things that ye would*, and are indeed incapable of doing them without

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

[a] *The flesh hath desires contrary to the Spirit.*] As it is plain, that by the *flesh*, which is the same with what the apostle elsewhere calls *the body of sin* and *the old man* (Rom. vi. 6), we are to understand that *natural corruption* and depravity which is the ruling principle in a state of nature, and has so far infected all the faculties of man, that even the regenerate are troubled still with the remainders of it, and find it working in the motions of indwelling sin within them: so by *the Spirit*, which is here set in opposition to it, and is elsewhere expressed by *the new man* that is put on by such as are *renewed in the spirit of their mind*, (Eph. iv. 23, 24,) we are to understand that *supernatural principle of grace* which is imparted from above to the renewed soul, to overcome the passions of the carnal mind, to set us free from the dominion of our lusts, and to inspire us with a love to holiness, which Divine and heavenly principle being communicated to us by *the Holy Spirit*, has frequently the title of *the Spirit* given to it, as it is plainly the effect and fruit of it; for *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit* (John iii. 6.)—And there is such a contrariety in these two principles, that they are continually opposing one another in their desires and tendency, so that (as the apostle adds) *ye do not any thing that ye would* (for so it is expressed in the original, and not *ye cannot do*, &c.) ye do them not without doing violence to the opposite principle that would be drawing you another way; which is agreeable to what the apostle elsewhere says, Rom. vii. 19, *For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

SECT. X.

your overbearing, either the desires of animal nature, or the nobler dictates of an enlightened and sanctified Spirit. Now surely you may easily judge, since one of these must be opposed, and one only can be pleased and pursued, to which of them the preference is to be given. Gal. V. 17.

18 But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

18 *But*, for your encouragement to a wise and happy choice, you will, I hope, always remember, that *if ye be led by the Spirit* of God in the paths of evangelical holiness and obedience, and act according to that new and spiritual nature he has formed in you, in the prevailing bent and tenor of your lives, *ye are not* then *under* the condemning sentence of *the law*, but are in consequence of this entitled to every benefit and privilege of the gospel.

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

19 And a farther argument will arise from considering the different tendency of these principles, and the effects or fruits of which they are productive, on the one hand and the other. *Now*, as to the former part of the view, *the works of the flesh are* very obvious and *manifest*,[b] *which are* such as [*these:*] *Adultery*, a crime to be considered as in the first rank of enormities, as tending so directly to embitter conjugal life, and to introduce confusion and ruin into families; *fornication*, which, how light soever heathens may make of it, is in the sight of God a very grievous offence; as all *uncleanness* and immodesty of behaviour, and all *lasciviousness* in every kind and act of it, must also be, though fools who make a mock at sin, mention these things in sport rather than with detestation.

20 Idolatry, witch-

20 *Idolatry* likewise proceeds from this corrupt principle, as it inclines men to choose some sensible object for their devotions, and often such an one as may patronize their most irregular passions.

[b] *The works of the flesh are manifest.*] As some of the fruits which are here specified, seem to consist in errors of the *mind*, and others are the product of an evil disposition of *spirit*, it has been thought not easy to perceive with what propriety they are called *works of the flesh*; and Dr. Whitby offers several considerations to account for it. But if *the flesh* be taken (as it appears from hence it should be) for that *natural corruption* which in the note before is said to have infected all the faculties of man, and so extends to all the powers of the *mind* as well as to the appetites of the *body*, there is no difficulty in ascribing each of the particulars here enumerated to *the flesh*, as it is evident they all proceed from *that corruption* by means of which *even the mind and conscience is defiled*. Tit. i. 15.

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 20.

craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

From hence is also *witchcraft*,[c] whereby desperate wretches are led to attempt an express association with infernal spirits, in order to gratify that malignant disposition of mind which excites and arms them against those who are regarded by them with an evil eye: and to the same original are owing implacable and bitter *enmities*, outrageous *strifes* and quarrels, inordinate *transports of* ill-placed and ill-proportioned *zeal*, deep *resentments* treasured up in the mind, clamorous *contentions* vented with eagerness, and obstinately carried on, together with the keen *divisions of a party spirit*,[d] among those who ought to be united in one interest and affection: yea, sometimes these ill principles proceed so far as to produce seditions in the state, and *heresies* also in religious communities,[e] by which professing Christians are induced to separate from each other, and to form sects, who, instead of maintaining true candour and benevolence, renounce and condemn each other. To this corrupt source we are also to trace the many *envyings* which are so commonly to be seen against the prosperity and success of others; and sometimes *murders* too, contrived

21 Envyings, murders,

[c] *Witchcraft.*] I know some would render the word φαρμακια *poisoning*; but I think it is with justice Mr. Leigh has observed, that this is comprehended under the word *murders*; nor is there any reason to believe *the flesh* so particularly inclined to this *one kind of murder*, as to give reason for specifying it rather than any other. It is certain that, on account of the drugs made use of in some supposed magical compositions, this word is often used to express those practices in which *combinations with invisible malignant powers*, were believed and intended, to which (whether they had, or had not, that real foundation which has generally been believed,) it is well known the Gentiles, even in the most learned nations, were very much addicted; as Mr. Weston has shewn at large in the 7th chapter of his late learned treatise on the Rejection of Christian Miracles.

[d] *Divisions of a party spirit.*] We render διχοστασιαι *seditions*; but as that rather expresses a *state crime*, and the original word seems more general, I choose to express it by a *periphrasis*, sufficiently distinguishable from the other evils here mentioned, and tending naturally towards those heresies mentioned in the next article, as I understand it: yet, as *seditions* in the state are great evils, and the word διχοστασιαι may express dispositions leading to them, I introduce the mention of them into the paraphrase.

[e] *Heresies.*] The proper signification of *heresies* here seems to be what I have briefly expressed in the paraphrase, and I must beg leave to refer to what Mr Hallet has written upon this subject, as containing the reasons which have determined me to prefer it: for this is by no means a proper place to discuss a subject so much controverted. Yet I doubt not but *heresies*, in the *ecclesiastical* sense, as distinguished from what I take to be the scriptural, may generally be said to be *works of the flesh*; as bad inclinations of mind naturally lead to bad opinions, and to a haughty and factious manner of obtruding them upon others.

SECT. X.

Gal VI. 2.

ders, drunkenness, revellings: and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

and perpetrated by those whose passions and interests clash to such a degree, that nothing less than the destruction of the antagonist can appease the rage; and, to complete the catalogue, all kinds of irregular self-indulgence, and particularly *drunkenness*, that sinks a man into a beast, and those disorderly and gluttonous *revellings*,[f] by which the rational powers are in a great measure extinguished, or at least rendered incapable of performing their offices in a proper manner. These, *and such like*, are the works of the flesh; *concerning which I* now solemnly *forewarn you, as I have also formerly declared* for your security when I was present with you, *that they who practise such things*, whatever zeal they may pretend for the externals of religion in any of the forms of it, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*, or be admitted to the possession of it; and are indeed so far from having any title to be numbered among Christians, that they shall soon be disowned, and turned out of that place which they have no right to hold in the church, with just infamy and detestation.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.

Such, I say, are the fruits and tendencies of 22
the flesh: *but the* blessed *fruit of the Spirit*, in those who are governed by that gracious principle which is derived from him, *is* something quite of a different nature; for this, wherever it hath impregnated the mind, produces the amiable dispositions of undissembled *love* and holy *joy*, of universal benevolence of heart, and of that cheerful temper which is naturally connected with it: it engages us to cultivate *peace* with all men; and where we meet with injuries and provocations from any, to bear them with much *long suffering*, before we enter into any contentions about them: it forms us to *gentleness* in the whole of our conduct, and inspires a tender

[f] *Revellings.*] Κωμοι, or *revellings*, among the Greeks, (as Mr. Locke observes,) were "a disorderly spending of "the night in feasting, with a licentious "indulging to wine good cheer, music, "dancing, &c." and in this sense the word is explained by Hesychius and Suidas. We meet with it but twice elsewhere, (Rom. xiii. 13; and 1 Pet. iv. 3;) and in both places it is joined, as here, with other riotous excesses. But though the heathens were notoriously addicted to them, it is a sad evidence of the prevailing power of *corruption*, and it were well the consequences of it were more laid to heart, that among those who bear the name of Christians, any should make it a diversion to resemble them in such indulgences, and not be ashamed of running to the *same excess of riot*.

SECT. X.

Gal. V. 22

care that we may not, by any thing rough and overbearing, grieve and injure before we are aware: it excites us to such acts of generous *goodness* as our own circumstances may afford, and those of our neighbour require: it is also the Spirit of truth as well as of love, and leads us most strictly to observe *fidelity*,[g] or good faith and uprightness, in all our dealings neither in any instance imposing upon others, nor failing in any of those engagements which it is in our power to fulfil: It teaches us *meekness*, even when we are obliged to reprove others, or otherwise to animadvert upon them for their faults: and, with regard to the government of our corporeal appetites, it dictates the strictest *temperance*, that we may neither exceed in the quantity nor the kind of our food, or in any other indulgence of animal nature. These, as you plainly see, are most excellent dispositions, and *against such* [*things*] as these *there is no law*; they have so manifest and evident a goodness in them, that they never were forbidden by any human institutions; and those who in the general course of their lives practise them, under the influence of this Spirit, shall by the grace of the gospel be delivered from the condemning sentence of the Divine law.

23 Meekness, temperance: such there is no law.

24 *And* this is now, upon the whole, the character of all true Christians; for *they who* indeed *are Christ's*, they who have received his Spirit, and whom he will finally own as belonging to him, *have crucified the flesh with* all [*its*] irregular *passions and desires*, and doomed it to a slow and painful, but to a certain death; as if, like one that is crucified, the body of sin were fastened to the cross, and left to expire upon it: and this they do, out of love to the memory of their crucified Lord, by a continual regard to

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

[g] *Fidelity.*] It is observed in note [a], on Mat. xxiii. 23; (Vol. II. p. 344.) that the words πιστις, has undoubtedly this signification in many other places. So we may understand it of the *faithfulness* of God, or his *fidelity* to his promises, Rom. iii. 3; and where it is applied to *servants* we expressly render it *fidelity*. Tit. ii. 10. And though it generally signifies the grace of *faith*, or *the confidence reposed in another*; yet where we find it joined, as in the place before us, with other *moral virtues*, it may be rather taken to denote *fidelity*. See Mat. xxiii. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 12; vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 10; and Rev. ii. 19.

whom they are animated strenuously to persevere in so self-denying a resolution. SECT. X.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

If therefore *we* profess to *live in the Spirit*[h], if we profess to be members of the Christian church, and to have that inward principle of Divine life which is produced by the Spirit, and continually subsists on communications from him, *let us also* make it our constant care, in consistency with such a profession, to *walk in the Spirit*, in a regular and orderly manner, taking every step according to rule and under his influence. And after all our care, as it is only by his grace that we are what we are, *let us not be vain-glorious*, or conceited of our own endowments or performances; *provoking one another* to mutual ill usage by a contemptuous carriage towards any whom we consider as beneath us, or secretly *envying one another* for any imagined or real advantage which our brother may possess and we desire: but rather, with an unaffected humility and true benevolence of heart, let us rejoice in the happiness of others, and endeavour to promote it to the utmost of our power.

Gal. V. 25.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

26

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn to consider this our mortal life as a state of warfare in which we are to be always struggling with enemies, with whom we are never to make either peace or truce; and since while we dwell in the body we shall still find *the flesh lusting against the Spirit*, let it be our constant concern, that the desires of *the flesh* may be opposed and mortified, and that the interests of *the Spirit* may be more and more advanced. And though the contrariety is such between them, that we cannot completely and continually *do the things which we would*, let us in the main *be led by the Spirit*, and give up our rational and governing powers more and more to its holy dictates, that we may *not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*; and though it still continues to solicit and disturb us, sin shall be kept from reigning in us.

Verse 17

17

18

16

We see what the works of the flesh are; which, if we really belong to Christ, we shall resolutely bind and crucify, with its affections and lusts. Let us endeavour more and more to subdue them, and learn (as it were) to use *the instruments of his death*

24

[h] *If we live in the Spirit.*] Mr. Howe insists largely on the energy of this phrase, *living in the Spirit*, as expressing, in terms nearly resembling those in Acts xvii. 28, our *continual dependence on its influences*, and also illustrates the significancy of the word στοιχωμεν in the latter clause of the verse, as explained in the paraphrase. See Howe on the Spirit, Vol. I. p. 257.

SECT. X. most effectually to accomplish *the death of sin*; bringing *the old man* to be *crucified with him* (Rom. vi. 6.) and *nailing it* to that *cross* to which *he hath nailed* that *decree of death* which in consequence of sin lay *against us*. (Col. ii. 14.)

Verse 19, 20, 21 In opposition to that cursed train of irregular and malignant affections which are here described as the works of the flesh (the continued indulgence of which is absolutely inconsistent with our hope of inheriting the kingdom of God), let us cultivate those

22, 23 amiable dispositions of mind against which there is no law: and may the Spirit of *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *long-suffering*, *gentleness*, *goodness*, the Spirit of *faith*, *meekness*, and *temperance*, work them more and more in our souls!

How vain are the cares of the generality of men to adorn their bodies, to improve their estates, to advance their rank, while their minds remain neglected! Yea, how vain are all cares to cultivate the mind with science, when compared with the infinitely more important care of improving it in such habits of goodness, whereby we shall be brought to resemble God, and be

26 fitted for ever to enjoy him! Let this be all our emulation, and in this let us place our glory; nor let us go about to provoke one another to any thing but this.

25 We profess to live in the Spirit of God, whose gracious influences are indeed the very life of our souls: let us make it our care also to walk in the Spirit, to regulate every action of our lives, every sentiment of our hearts, by a becoming regard to him; guarding solicitously against any thing that would grieve him, and encouraging those friendly offices of his, whereby we may be trained up in a growing meetness for the society of the blessed spirits above; and for that world, where the flesh shall be laid aside till all the seeds of corruption are worn out of its composition, and it be raised as pure as it shall be glorious in the image of that Saviour whose discipline has taught us to seek the victory over it, and whose grace enables us to obtain it.

SECT. XI.

The Apostle pursues his practical exhortations, especially enforcing mutual love, and a care of each other, with a zeal in doing good; and cautions the Galatians against thinking too favourably of their own spiritual state. Gal. VI. 1—10.

GALATIANS VI. 1.

I HAVE cautioned you against envy and mutual provocation; but, my *brethren*, rest not merely in a freedom from such unkind affections, towards each other, but labour to be mutually useful, and that in your best interests:

GAL. VI. 1. BRETHREN, if a

a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

and *if a man be overtaken in any fault* through his own frailty, or the surprise of a temptation, *do ye who are spiritual*,[a] and, having received the Spirit of God yourselves, are best fitted for such an office, endeavour to *restore such an one*, and to reduce (as it were) that disjointed member, not with a rigorous severity, but *in the spirit of meekness*, gentleness, and love; *considering thyself*,[b] whosoever thou art, *lest thou also* being still in the body, and liable to the like assaults, *shouldst be tempted*, and fall as thy brother hath done, so as on this account to stand in need of the same kind office from him which thou art now called to render to him. Be ready then in this and all other respects to *bear one another's burdens*; and let it be your care with mutual tenderness to comfort and support the weak; (compare Rom. xv. 1; and 1 Thess. v. 14.) accommodating yourselves to each other in the most engaging and obliging manner, that you may thus make all about you as easy and happy as you can; *and so*, instead of seeking to impose the heavy burden of the Mosaic law on others, you will *fulfil* that which is especially *the law of Christ*, even that law of love which was enjoined by him as his command, and will esteem it as your highest honour to wear that badge of mutual love by which he requires his disciples to be known; (John xiii. 34, 35; xv. 12.) And surely we may willingly receive that law from one who was himself such an unequalled example of love; and who with so gracious a sympathy bore our burdens of

SECT. XI.

Gal. VI. 1.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

2

[a] *Ye who are spiritual.*] Dr. Whitby, and some others, understand this as a charge addressed to *ministers*, who by the extraordinary gifts they had received were best fitted for this work. But we know that the word *spiritual* is in the writings of St. Paul sometimes opposed to *carnal*, (Rom. vii. 14; viii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 1.) and if it should be allowed here to signify such as were endowed with some *supernatural gifts*, it would not support the limitation proposed, since the apostle speaks of the Galatians in general as having *received the Spirit*: (chap. iii. 2.) I must therefore think, with Mr. Locke, that the expression here signifies such as were *eminent* for *gifts* or *graces*.

[b] (*Considering thyself.*) It is justly observed by Mr. Blackwall, (Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 133, 134.) that this sudden transition from the *plural* number to the *singular* adds a great deal of beauty and force to the caution; for it is as if the apostle should have said, "Let every "particular person among you remember "that he may also be in danger through "his own frailty; and by thus *looking to* "*himself* he will be induced to carry it with "greater tenderness to others, and will be "more disposed to pity and assist them."

SECT. XI.

sorrow, and carried away the load of our guilt.

Gal. VI. 3.

Remember too the caution I have given you against vain-glory, (chap. v. 26.) and take heed of an overweening opinion of yourselves: *for if any one think himself to be something* considerable, *when* indeed *he is nothing* like what he apprehends; and in particular, if he be so conceited of his own sufficiency as to imagine he is wise and good enough to resist any temptation that may arise, and please himself that he may glory in the applause of others as secure from danger, *he deceiveth himself*, and the worst part of the fraud falls on his own head; so that, instead of gaining from others, or securing to himself that honour which he expects and aims at, he only makes himself so much the more contemptible, and his danger is proportionable to the high conceit which he hath of himself. *But* 4 to prevent so great an evil, *let every one try* and examine *his own work* by the word of God, the great rule to which all our actions and thoughts should be adjusted, and take care that it be such as God and his own conscience may approve; *and then he shall have* matter of *rejoicing* in what he finds *in himself alone, and not in* the applause he receives from *another*:[c] he shall then have a solid foundation of delight, in reflecting upon the state of his own soul, and what the grace of God has wrought in him and by him, instead of subsisting precariously and meanly on the good opinion or applause of others, who so frequently know not what it is that they commend, and are imposed upon by false appearances, so that their testimony can give but very little solid satisfaction to a mind that thinks justly and se- 5 riously. *For every one shall* finally *bear his*

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

[c] *He shall have* matter of *rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*] Mr. Locke thinks that the apostle hints here at the same thing which he expresses afterwards more fully, concerning the *false teachers*, (ver. 13.) that what they had in view was to *glory in others*, whom they prevailed with to be *circumcised*; and so would have καυχᾶσθαι to be rendered *glorying*, (which is indeed the common meaning of the word,) and would consider it as a caution to them to be careful of their own particular actions, that they were such as would afford them *matter of glorying in themselves*, and not vainly *in others*. But the word also signifies *rejoicing*, as our translators often render it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. i. 26; ii. 16; Heb. iii. 6. which seems sufficiently to express the sense of it, as I have explained it in the paraphrase, and evidently suits the apostle's way of writing.

own burden, and shall be accountable to God, in the great day when he appears before him, for his own behaviour; so that there is but little room to be solicitous about the sentiments of others, in comparison of that care which we ought to take of our own temper and conduct. SECT. XI. Gal. VI. 5.

6 Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

A farther advice which I would give you is, 6 *Let him that is taught* and instructed *in the word* and doctrine of Christianity, liberally *communicate in all good things*, according to the ability that God hath given him, *to* the support and maintenance of *him that teacheth* him; that so the mind of the teacher may not be kept in an anxious state about his own subsistence, but may with greater composure and cheerfulness attend to the cares of his sacred office.

7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

It is indeed an easy thing for interested 7 men to find excuses for the neglect of this and other liberalities which are required by the gospel of Christ; but *be not deceived*, in this or any other respect, by the treachery of your own hearts which may more fatally impose upon yourselves than upon any others; for though men know not what to answer to some artful pleas which may be invented as an excuse from duty, the blessed *God*, who penetrates all hearts, as well as sees all external circumstances, *is not* to be *mocked* by these vain pretences: *for whatsoever a man soweth*, whether it be good or bad, whether he be liberal or sparing in it, *that shall he also reap*,[d] and the return shall be answerable to it, both with respect to the kind and degree of it. *So that* on the one hand, *he* 8 *that soweth to his flesh*, he that employs his substance, time, and thoughts, merely or chiefly in gratifying and indulging the flesh, or for the satisfaction of his own bodily necessities, conveniencies, or pleasures, *shall of the flesh reap* nothing better than *corruption*; and as the flesh itself shall soon corrupt in the grave, so will

8 For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap

[d] *Be not deceived*, &c.] The apostle here, with great propriety and force exposes the evasions some would make use of to excuse themselves from acts of *liberality*; by which, however they might impose on others, they would egregiously *deceive themselves*, as every circumstance lies open to an all-seeing God, and they assuredly should *reap* according as they *sowed*; a metaphor which he employs elsewhere to excite to liberality (2 Cor. ix. 6.) the thought of which must silence every vain pretence that may be brought against so plain a duty, and is most admirably suited to regulate and heighten the proportion, as well as to enforce the practice of it.

SECT. XI.

Gal. VI. 8.

he utterly lose all the fruits of his labour and expence in its service: *but*, on the other hand, *he that soweth to the Spirit*, he that under the influences of the Spirit of God employs his capacities, abilities, and possessions, to promote the interests of religion in his own mind and in the world about him, *shall*, as the fruit of what is thus sown by the continued assistance and grace *of the Spirit*, *reap life everlasting*; when he shall leave the world, his immortal spirit shall inherit eternal glory, and whatsoever be his portion now, he shall be fully recompensed at the resurrection of the just, (Luke xiv. 14.) when all the hope of the sinner is perished.

corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

9 *And*, having such a prospect then before us, *let us not be weary* or discouraged, *in* all the labour and fatigue, in all the expence and difficulty of *well-doing*; *for in due season*, or in that proper time which the wisdom and goodness of God hath appointed (even when the harvest is come, for which it is best that we should now wait,) *we shall reap* an abundant and ample reward, *if we do not faint*, and suffer our hands to hang down, either through 10 sloth or fear. As long *therefore as we have opportunity*, as long as life continues, and Providence puts power in our hands, *let us* endeavour to *do good to all men*, to strangers and enemies, as well as brethren and friends, *but especially to them who are of the household of faith*, to them who are united to us in the bonds of Christian faith and love, and who on that account, as belonging to one family, and heirs of the same hope, have a peculiar claim to our regard.

9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

IMPROVEMENT.

THESE exhortations of the apostle cannot be expressed in more lively terms, and it is scarce possible to represent them in clearer and plainer language. The great difficulty here, and in other such instances, is to bring our hearts to submit to what our understanding must so readily apprehend and approve. Let us earnestly pray that God would diffuse more of his Spirit on all professing Christians, that, beholding each other with undissembled and fervent love, every one may affectionately endeavour to advance the happiness of all; and, instead of severely

censuring one another, let us endeavour mutual reformation, by such exhortations and advices as different circumstances may require: doing all in the spirit of Christian meekness, and in an humble sense of our own infirmities. Let us pray that the law of Christ, the new commandment he has given us to love one another, may in all its extent be ever sacred to us, and that in consequence of the regard we owe to so benevolent a Master, there may be a constant readiness in us to assist each other under every burden, to relieve according to our ability every want, and to do good to all as we have opportunity, but especially to those of the household of faith, who, as belonging to that household, whatever their station or circumstance in life may be, ought to be dear to every member of the family.

SECT. XI. Verse 1. 2. 10

Let us remember that there is as certain a connection between our conduct here and our state hereafter, as there is between the kind of grain sown and the harvest to be reaped from it. The generality, alas, are *sowing to the flesh*, and the harvest to such will be shame and corruption: but for our parts, let us *sow to the Spirit* liberally and largely, and *have our fruit unto holiness*, that we may thus inherit *everlasting life*, (Rom. vi. 22.) And when we are ready to *faint*, let us encourage ourselves and each other with the prospect of that blessed day, when, though *the seed-time* may be attended *with tears*, we *shall come again rejoicing, bringing our sheaves* of honour and joy *with us*, (Psal. cxxvi. 5, 6.) It is in due season, it is at the time God has wisely appointed that we shall receive this reward of grace; let us wait for it, as we well may, with patience and humility. 7 8 9

The day is coming when *every one shall bear his own burden*, and each of us shall answer for *himself*; that awful day, when every one shall reap *the fruit of his own way*, and shall *receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*, (2 Cor. v. 10.) Let us see to it, therefore, not to *deceive ourselves* with a vain imagination *that we are something, when we are nothing*; and not be satisfied to rest in the good opinion which others have of us, so as to have our rejoicing in them. And, whatsoever duty be required of us, let us not amuse ourselves with trifling excuses, which never can deceive that God who is not to be mocked; but let us set ourselves in earnest, ever to cultivate true inward religion, even that of the heart, in the sight of him who searcheth it! then will the testimony of our conscience be a source of joy; and we shall find that joy solid and permanent. 5 3 4 7

And if God bless the ministers of his gospel, as the instruments of bringing this joy to the soul, it will be attended with that readiness which the apostle requires to communicate to them in all good things, while, if they understand their character and office, there will be in them that moderation of desire on the one hand, and that zeal and love for souls on the other, which will 6

SECT. XI. make it a thousand times more pleasant to communicate spirituals than to receive temporals, even from those who give with the most willing mind, and so double the gift, whether it be greater or less.

SECT. XII.

The apostle concludes his epistle, with cautioning them against the attacks of Judaizing teachers, declaring the indifference of circumcision or uncircumcision, and pressing them strictly to adhere to that gospel for which he had himself suffered so much. Gal. VI. 11, *to the end.*

GALATIANS VI. 11.

SECT. XII. Gal. VI. 11

YOU see, my brethren, *with what large letters*[a] *I have written* this epistle *to you with my own hand*,[b] not being willing to omit this opportunity of testifying the affection and concern which I have for you, not choosing, as I mostly do on such occasions, to employ the pen of another who might be more used to the Greek character than myself.

GAL. VI. 11.

YE see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

12 The sum of all is this; that *as many as desire to make a fair appearance in the flesh*, and to set themselves off by standing up for the observance of the Jewish rites and ceremonies, *these* would *constrain you* Gentile converts *to be circumcised*, and to be subject with them to the carnal ordinances of the law, *only lest they should suffer persecution*,[c] which the profession of the Chris-

12 As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should

[a] *You see with what large letters.*] Dr. Whitby remarks in his note on this place, "that St. Paul never uses the word γραμμασι when he speaks of his *epistles*; and "that τοῖς γράμμασι may therefore "refer not to the *largeness* or the length "of *this epistle*, but to the *largeness* or in-"elegancy of the *characters* in which it "was written." So too Theophylact and some others understand it, of the apostle's urging it as a proof of his affection for them, as it must shew he was *no ready writer*, to see *in what kind of letters* he had written to them. He might not be well versed in the Greek characters; or this inaccuracy of his writing might perhaps be owing to the infirmity or weakness of his nerves, which he had hinted at before. See note [b] on Gal. iv. 14. p. 53. I have therefore altered the translation here, and given what appears to be the literal sense.

[b] *I have written to you with my own hand.*] This might be well considered as an argument of his more than ordinary concern for them; for it was usual with St. Paul, as we have observed elsewhere, to dictate his epistles, and to employ a person as an amanuensis to write them from his mouth: (see note [c] on Rom. xvi. 22. Vol. IV. p. 179.) And perhaps his own *inaccuracy* in forming the *Greek characters*, which he refers to in the words before, may suggest one reason among several others for his doing it. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 21; Col. iv. 18; 2 Thess. iii. 17; and see the note on this last text.

[c] *Only lest they should suffer persecution.*]

SECT. XII.

suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

tian faith would otherwise bring upon them, *for* owning their dependence for salvation, not on the law, but on *the cross of Christ*[d]; as it is plainly a regard to this which so much incenses the unbelieving Jews, and engages them to raise so many tumults against us, wherever they have an opportunity of doing it; and these half Christians aim at appeasing them by a zeal to spread the Mosaic institutions among the Gentiles. This is the point they have in view, and, whatsoever they pretend, it is not any real veneration for the law that prompts them to be zealous for it: *for neither they themselves who are circumcised*, and so are solemnly obliged to observe the whole of it, shew a concern to *keep the law*, or manifest a true esteem for it as a spiritual and Divine institution; nor is it from any truly religious principle that they labour to proselyte you to it; *but they desire to have you circumcised*, to make their boast of you among the Jews; *that they may glory* in this mark fixed *in your flesh*, and may avail themselves of the many converts to Judaism, which they have the interest and address to make.

Gal. VI. 12.

13 For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. 13

This seems to open the main secret spring of that zeal for the Jewish ceremonies, in some that professed themselves Christians, which occasioned so much uneasiness in the apostolic churches. The persecuting edicts of the Jewish sanhedrim, the influence of which extended to remote synagogues, had induced many, who *secretly believed in Christ*, to decline an *open* acknowledgment of him (John ix. 22; xii. 42; xix. 38), which yet our Lord himself had so expressly required, that their consciences, during this state of *dissimulation*, must be in great anxiety. (See Mark viii. 38.) But afterwards, when a scheme arose of blending Judaism with Christianity, it may be supposed that this would abate the edge of *persecution* against those who fell in with it, and especially against those who urged the Gentile converts to such complete proselytism, though it might sharpen it against other Christians: and this might perhaps weigh more with some than they themselves were aware, in concurrence with the desire of making disciples, and the prejudices of education, which must naturally be supposed to have their share. Compare chap. v. 11.

[d] *For the cross of Christ.*] It is observed by Jerom on this text, "that Tiberius "and Caius Cæsar made laws to authorize the Jews who were dispersed "throughout the Roman empire to follow the rites of their religion and the "ceremonies which had been transmitted to them from their fathers:" To which he adds, "that *circumcised Christians* were by the Pagans looked upon "as Jews, while those who made profession of the gospel and were *uncircumcised* were violently *persecuted* both by "the Jews and Pagans; on which account "some early *teachers* of the church, to be "delivered from the fear of *persecution*, "submitted to be *circumcised* themselves, "and also recommended it to their *disciples*." Both Archbishop Tillotson (Vol. II. p. 367), and Mons. Saurin (Serm. Vol. XI. p. 49, 50) agree in expounding this text with a reference to these edicts: but I think it best illustrated by the observation in the preceding note, as the apostle seems to speak of an attempt to *escape persecution* not by *receiving circumcision*, but by *imposing* or *urging* it.

SECT. XII.

Gal. VI. 14.

But, for my part, I have no such selfish worldly views, and *God forbid that I should glory*, either in my descent or circumcision, in my abilities or interest in making converts, or indeed in any thing else, *unless it be in* the regard I have been brought to pay to *the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and the reliance which I have for justification on his death and sufferings; *by* the believing views of *which* I am made indifferent to all things here, and *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*: so that I view the world, as little impressed by all its charms as a spectator would be by any thing which had been graceful in the countenance of a crucified person when he beholds it blackened in the agonies of death; and am no more affected by the objects round me than one that is expiring would be struck with any of those prospects which his dying eyes might view from the cross on which he was suspended. And well indeed it may be expected that it should be so; *for* as to those who have truly believed *in Christ Jesus*, all things are counted loss and dung for him, the whole dependence of the soul for righteousness and life is built on him, and the whole heart centres in him: and where this is the case, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, neither can the one profit, nor the other hurt, *but* [*there is*] actually *a new creation*: old things are passed away, and new views and dispositions are introduced under the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God, in consequence of which believers are (as it were) brought into a new world, and, being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, are formed to a life of holiness, and quickened to the exercise of that faith which operates by love. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 19; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. v. 6; Eph. ii. 10; and Phil. iii. 8.) *And as many as shall walk according to this rule*, and govern themselves by such maxims, [*may*] *peace and mercy* [*be*] *upon them!* May that peace which arises from a sense of the pardoning mercy and free grace of God, ever rest upon them, *even upon the* whole *Israel of God* every where; for persons of such a character, and not the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the true Israelites.

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Now therefore, *for the future, let no man trouble me* with reflections on my character, or with disputes concerning the necessity of circumcision, and grieve my heart with additional sorrows, *for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;*[e] marks of far more importance than circumcision, and on which, whatever your Judaizing teachers may think, I value myself much more; even the scars which I have received, by stripes and chains and other means, in the service of Christ, amidst the various hardships which I have borne for him, and which ought to render me venerable in the eyes of all who have a due regard to him. SECT. XII. Gal. VI. 17.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

And thus, *brethren*, I conclude with my sincere and earnest prayer for you, that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in all its sanctifying and comforting influences, may [*be*] *with your spirit*, to direct you into the ways of truth and peace, of holiness and comfort. *Amen.* 18

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT meanness is there in those views and objects in which the generality of mankind are so apt to glory! How little satisfaction can there be in making proselytes to a party, and spreading forms and notions, when compared with the joy of promoting true religion in the hearts of men, and thereby advancing the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls! And of what service will it be to make a fair appearance, and to be zealous for the externals of religion, so as to gain the applause of men, and to have many followers, if at the same time we have so little veneration for the cross of Christ as to be afraid or ashamed of owning the necessity of relying on his righteousness alone for justification, lest we should suffer persecution upon that account, or be exposed to the reproaches of the world about us! Verse 12, 13

May Divine grace teach us to esteem the cross of Christ more 14

[e] *I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*] Dr. Potter thinks (Gr. Antiq. Vol. II. p. 7.) that the apostle here alludes to the Στιγμαῖα, or *brands*, with which the Greeks used to mark those that were appointed to serve in the *wars*, lest they should attempt to make their escape. (See Lipsius, de Milit. Rom. Lib. i. Dial. 9.) But perhaps the reference may be to those *marks* by which the *votaries* of particular *deities* were distinguished. See my Sermons to young Persons, Numb. iv. at the beginning.—Mr. Blackwall (in his Sacr. Class. Vol. II. p. 66, 67.) considers it as an allusion to an Egyptian custom, according to which any man's servant who fled to the temple of Hercules, and had the sacred *brands* or marks of that *deity* impressed upon him, was supposed to be under his immediate care and protection, and by that to be privileged from all violence and harsh treatment. And in this view he forms a large and beautiful paraphrase on this verse.

SECT. XII.

highly, and to glory in nothing but our knowledge of it, and our hopes and expectations from it! May we all feel its vital efficacy, to *crucify us to the world, and the world to us;* that we may look upon the world but as a dead and worthless thing, which neither can afford us any advantage, nor yield us any pleasure, to engage our hearts to choose it for our portion; and, being crucified and dead to all things in it, may we be so entirely weaned from all affection to it, as not to make it any more our principal design and study to pursue it; but, being indifferent both to its smiles and frowns, as to the influence which once they had upon us, may we be neither moved by any prospect of self-interest on the one hand, nor terrified by the fear of persecution on the other!

Verse. Let us not lay the stress of our religion on the name we bear,
15 or ground the hope of our acceptance on being of this or that denomination of Christians: but let it be our chief concern to have experience of a thorough change of heart and life, and to obtain that renovation of soul, that new creation, without which *neither circumcision nor uncircumcision* can *avail any thing*, and with which the one, as well as the other, will be accepted of God.

16 It is the written word of God that is the rule we are to go by, both in the doctrines and the precepts of it; let us be careful that we walk according to it, and regulate our principles and conduct by it: then will God own us as his true Israel, and then shall *peace and mercy be upon us.* And surely, how diligently soever we observe this rule, how exactly soever we conform to
17 it, and how much soever we may suffer for our adherence to it, we depend upon mercy for the communication of peace, and must ascribe all our hopes of happiness to pardoning clemency and free grace. May that grace ever be with our spirit, to
18 sanctify, to quicken, and to cheer us; and may we always be ready to maintain the honour of that, which is indeed our very life! Amen.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

EPHESIANS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE apostle Paul is universally allowed to be the *author* of this excellent *epistle;* but Dr. Mill and others have contended that it was written, not to the church of Ephesus, but to that of Laodicea. This they would argue from some passages of this epistle (chap. i. 15; iii. 2; and iv. 21.) which seem more suitable to persons whom he had *never seen*, which was the case of them at Laodicea, (Col. ii. 1.) than to the Ephesians, with whom he had been conversant about *three years;* Acts xx. 31. See note [m] on that text, Vol. III. sect. xlvi. p. 305.) But what is principally urged for this opinion, is the direction given by the apostle at the close of his epistle to the Colossians, (Col. iv. 16.) "that "they should cause the epistle which he wrote to them "to be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and "they should likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." From whence it is inferred, that the epistle now before us must be that which is intended there, and was originally written to the Laodiceans.

These several objections will be obviated in the notes upon those places on which they are grounded, and can be no sufficient warrant, in opposition to the first verse of this epistle, in which it is addressed expressly *to the saints at Ephesus*, to introduce an alteration in the text which hath not the authority of any single manuscript in being, or any ancient version, to support it.

We are told, indeed, it was affirmed by Marcion, an early heretic of the second century, that what is called the epistle to the Ephesians was inscribed to the Laodiceans: but he is censured upon this account by Tertullian* (who wrote against him in the beginning of the third century,) as setting up an interpolation of his own, in opposition to the true testimony of the church. And though Basil,† and Jerom,‡ in the latter part of the fourth century, speak of some copies in which the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ were omitted, yet they allow at the same time that this epistle was written *to the saints at Ephesus;* whom, by a strange interpretation, in allusion to the name by which the Lord revealed himself, Exod. iii. 14, some would suppose, "the apostle calls "in a peculiar sense *the saints who are*, as being united "unto *Him who is.*" But this omission evidently makes but a very odd reading, unless we admit of the conjecture of Archbishop Usher,§ that a void space was left after *the saints who are*—, and this might be intended for a circular epistle to any of the churches of the Lesser Asia, whose name might be occasionally inserted to fill up the blank.

There is however no sufficient reason for departing from the common established reading, which inscribes this epistle *to the saints at Ephesus;* especially when we find in the most early times, that Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers (who lived at the time when this epistle was written,) in the smaller copy of his own epistle to the Ephesians, sect. xii. speaks to them of St. Paul, "as making mention of them in a whole epistle," which Cotelerius says, it is in vain to understand of any other epistle than this, and Dr. Lardner observes, must plainly mean the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians.‖ And in the larger copy of the same epistle, sect. vi. he declares to the Ephesians, "Ye are, as Paul wrote to you, "*one body and one spirit;*" where it is manifest there is a reference to the very words of St.

* Tertull. contra Marcion. lib. v. cap. 11, 17.
† Basil. adv. Eunom. lib. ii. p. 733.
‡ Hieron. Comment. in Ephes. init.
§ Usher Annal. ad. A. C. LXIV. p. 686.
‖ Lardn. Credibil. part ii. Vol. I. p. 457.

Paul in this epistle, chap. iv. 4. So that the testimony of Ignatius is express in both the copies, which ever be received as genuine, to which indeed the smaller has apparently the better title. The same is also still more clear with respect to Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, who were both fathers of the second century, and have both quoted this epistle in express terms under the title of the epistle to the Ephesians.* No further testimony therefore can be needful to make it manifest that this epistle was received in the first ages of the church, as written by St. Paul to the Ephesians.

It is well known, that Ephesus was the chief city of the Proconsular Asia, which was a part of what was called the Lesser Asia. It was particularly famous for the temple of Diana, a most magnificent and stately structure, which was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world: and its inhabitants were noted in their Gentile state for their idolatry and skill in magic, and for their luxury and lasciviousness. The apostle Paul, at his first coming to them in the year of our Lord 54, according to his usual custom, preached to the Jews there in their synagogue, many of whom were settled in the city and the neighbouring parts; but, as he then was hastening to the passover at Jerusalem, he only spent one sabbath there, and left them with a promise *to return to them again;* (Acts xviii. 19—21.) Accordingly he came again to Ephesus the following year, (Acts xix. 1, *& seq.*) and preached the word with such success, and wrought such extraordinary miracles among them, that a numerous church was formed there, chiefly made up of Gentile converts, whose piety and zeal were so remarkable, that many of them, in abhorrence of the curious arts which they had used, burnt their magical books to a great value; (Acts xix. 19.) And such was the concern of the apostle for their spiritual advantage, that he did not leave them till the year 57, when he had been about three years among them (Acts xx. 31.) After this he spent some time in Macedonia and Achaia, and in his return to Jerusalem in the year 58, he sent for *the elders of the church* of Ephesus to Mile-

* Iren. liv. v. cap. 2. § 3. & Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. p. 409.

tus, and most affectionately took his leave of them, as one that should *see them no more:* appealing to them with what faithfulness he had discharged his ministry among them, and solemnly exhorting them to look well to the flock committed to their care, lest they should be corrupted by seducing teachers, who would arise among themselves, and artfully endeavour to pervert them, (Acts xx. 17, *to the end.*) And we see afterwards, from the coolness and declension they are charged with in the epistle to the angel of the church of Ephesus, (Rev. ii. 4, 5.) how just and seasonable was this caution that he gave them at his parting from them.

From what the apostle says of himself in this epistle, it appears that it was written by him while he was a prisoner, (chap. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20.) as he was likewise when he wrote to the Colossians; (Col. iv. 18.) And there is such a manifest correspondence between these two epistles, both in their subject matter, and in the very form of the expressions, that it may justly be concluded they were written at the same time, and sent together by Tychicus; who was intrusted with the care of both, (Eph. vi. 21, 22; and Col. iv. 7, 8.) but was attended by Onesimus when he delivered that to the Colossians, (Col. iv. 9.) Now, as it is not to be thought the Apostle Paul would have employed Onesimus in such a service till after he had been with his master Philemon, it appears highly probable from hence, that the apostle sent him first with his epistle to Philemon, by whom he was received (agreeably to his request) not as a servant, but as a brother, (Philem. ver. 16.) and had his freedom given him; and, from the confidence the apostle had in the obedience of Philemon, and in his readiness to do even more than he said, (ver. 21.) he might well take this opportunity of his going with Tychicus to recommend Onesimus to the Colossians, by joining him in his message to that church. Since then the apostle was in expectation of being soon released from his confinement when he wrote to Philemon, and trusting he should shortly visit him, desires him to prepare a lodging for him, (ver. 22.) this may induce us to conclude, that he wrote that epistle towards the close of his first

imprisonment at Rome; and as the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians appear to have been sent at the same time with that to Philemon, it may be inferred that he wrote these not long before, and sent them all together in the year of our Lord 63, which was the 9th of the Emperor Nero. (See Vol. III. sect. lx. note *g*, p. 401.)

The design of the apostle Paul in this epistle (the former part of which is *doctrinal*, and the latter *practical*,) was "to establish the Ephesians in the faith; and to this "end, to give them more exalted views of the eternal "love of God, and of the glorious excellence and dig-"nity of Christ; to shew them they were saved by grace, "and, howsoever wretched they were once, the Gentiles "now have equal privileges with the Jews; to encou-"rage them, by declaring with what stedfastness he "suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he "prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it; "and finally, in consequence of their profession, to en-"gage them to the *practice* of those duties that became "their character as Christians."

The *doctrinal* part of this epistle is contained in the three first chapters: in which the apostle introduces several important truths for the instruction of the Ephesians in the great doctrines of the gospel, that they might be well grounded in the faith; and, for the encouragement of the Gentile converts, acquaints them with the Christian privileges to which they were entitled. And here,

I. After saluting the Ephesians with an acknowledgment of their faith, (chap. i. 1, 2,) the apostle testifies his thankfulness to God for his distinguishing love and favour to them, in calling them to be partakers of the blessings of the gospel, in consequence of his eternal purpose to glorify his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of his Son and the communication of his Spirit; (ver. 3—14.)

II. He assures them of the fervency of his prayers for them, that they might have a clear knowledge of the great objects of their hope and expectation; and, from an experimental sense of the exceeding greatness of the pow-

er of God, might have a fixed regard to the supreme authority and dignity of Christ, who by that power is raised from the dead, and exalted to be Head over all things to the church; (ver. 15, to the end.)

III. To magnify the riches of Divine grace, and to affect them with a more grateful sense of their obligations to it, the apostle leads them to reflect upon that wretched state of moral death in which the gospel found them; and shews them it was owing to the rich mercy and the great love of God that they were raised in Christ from death to life, and in the whole of their salvation it was evident that they were saved by grace, and not by works, or any righteousness of their own; (chap. ii. 1—10.)

IV. He represents the happy change that was thus made in their condition; that they who once were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and afar off from God, were now received into his church, and had an equal right to all the privileges of it with the Jewish converts; the middle wall of partition having been broken down by Christ in favour of the believing Gentiles, who being reconciled to God were no more strangers as they had been formerly, but were united in one body under Christ the common Head of all believers, and, being animated by one Spirit, and built upon the same foundation, were made an holy temple in the Lord; (ver. 11, to the end.)

V. To encourage and confirm the Gentile converts in their adherence to the gospel, and recommend it more to their regard, the apostle in the strongest terms expresses the sense he had of the Divine goodness in appointing him to be the apostle of the Gentiles, and authorising him to preach among them the unsearchable riches of Christ; and declares how great an honour he esteemed it to be employed in making known the calling of the Gentiles to be joint-heirs with the Jews in all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, though he had suffered greatly for it, and was now in bonds on this account; (chap iii. 1—12.) And then,

VI. He entreats them not to be discouraged at the sufferings he underwent for his regard to the Gentiles, but rather to consider it as an honour to them, that in the stedfastness with which he suffered, they had such

a confirmation of the truth of his doctrine, and of the sincerity of his concern for their spiritual advantage; in proof of which he closes this part of his epistle with a most affectionate and earnest prayer for their establishment in the Christian faith, and their advancement in the knowledge and experience of the love of Christ, of which he speaks in the most lofty and exalted terms as far surpassing all conception, concluding in the warmth of his devotion with a grand and suitable doxology; (ver. 13, to the end.) And now,

The other part of this epistle, which is *practical*, is contained in the three remaining chapters: in which the apostle gives them several weighty exhortations and advices, for the direction of their lives and manners, that they might be regular in their practice; and tells them of the Christian duties that were required of them, to which the consideration of their privileges should engage them, pointing out to them the means and motives that were proper to promote the observance of them, and urging the great care and caution they should use to behave suitably to the profession which they made, and to the character they bore. And here,

I. The apostle, from the consideration of his own sufferings, as well as of the many important respects in which all true Christians are united, after a general exhortation to them to walk worthy of the excellency of their calling, particularly urges them to mutual forbearance and unity of Spirit, as being joined together in one church, and called to partake of the same privileges in Christ, without distinction either of Jew or Gentile: and, as a powerful inducement to their cultivating such a disposition, he represents the glorious foundation which Christ as the great Head of the church has laid for it in the variety of gifts and graces he has bestowed, and in the sacred offices he has appointed; which being all derived from the same Spirit, and designed for the same end, were all to be employed for the advancement of his interest and kingdom, and for the better edification of the whole church, till in the unity of the faith they should grow up into one perfect body under Christ their Head; and so must have a tendency to promote their

present union, and to inspire them with the most endearing affection to each other; (chap. iv. 1—16.)

II. He presses them, as having learned Christ, and been enlightened by the gospel, to shew the difference there was between them and the unconverted Gentiles, by an unspotted purity and holiness of behaviour, and not to walk like those from whom they were so happily distinguished by knowledge and grace; and cautions them in particular against lying, excess of anger, and stealing, and that corrupt communication to which the heathens were notoriously addicted, but which were inconsistent with the character of Christians, and grievous to the Holy Spirit: (ver. 17—30.)

III. He further cautions them against all malice, and urges them to mutual love and readiness to forgive, in consideration of the Divine compassions manifested in the gospel; and then pursues his exhortations to abstain from all inordinate desires, and from all manner of uncleanness and immodesty, as well in words as actions; in which, however they had shamefully indulged themselves in the darkness of heathenism, the light of Christianity displayed them in such odious colours as plainly shewed them to be unbecoming their profession, and no way reconcileable with the obligation they were under to walk as children of the light; (ver. 31, to the end; and chap. v. 1—14.)

IV. He recommends it to them, in consideration of their character and circumstances, to be prudent and circumspect in their whole conversation, as those who were instructed in the will of God; and not to seek for pleasure in a dissolute excess, but guarding against all intemperance, to make it the delightful business of their lives to express their gratitude to God, under the influences of his Spirit, by praising him for all his mercies in pious and devout thanksgivings; and while they were thus careful of their duty to God, he also urges them not to be negligent of the duties which they owed to one another as members of society, but to behave with due submission to each other in their several stations; (ver. 15—21.) And then,

V. Having hinted at the relative duties of society in general, he descends to particulars, and, beginning with the duties of husbands and wives, he recommends it to husbands to love their wives, in imitation of the love which Christ bears to the church, and presses upon wives the correspondent duty of conjugal subjection, in imitation of the subjection which the church pays to Christ the Head of it; (ver. 22, to the end.) From whence he passes on to the mutual duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters, giving suitable admonitions to each, and adding proper arguments to enforce them; (chap. vi. 1—9.) And, after this, for a conclusion of the whole,

VI. He gives a general exhortation to them all, of whatever condition or relation in life, to prepare for a strenuous combat with their spiritual enemies, by putting on the whole armour of God, and living in the exercise of those Christian graces that were necessary for their defence and safety: and having among other things exhorted them to fervency in prayer, he particularly recommends himself to their remembrance at the throne of grace, that he might carry on the important work in which he was engaged, with freedom and fidelity, whatever he might suffer for it; and leaving it to Tychicus (by whom he sent this epistle) more fully to inform them of every circumstance relating to him, he closes his epistle with an apostolical benediction, not only to themselves, but to all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; (ver. 10, to the end.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

SECT. I.

The apostle Paul begins the epistle with testifying, in the strongest terms, his joy that the believing Ephesians were called to the participation of Christian privileges in consequence of God's eternal purpose of glorifying his grace in their sanctification and salvation, through the blood of his son, and the communication of his Spirit. Eph. I. 1—14.

EPHES. I. 1.
PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

EPHESIANS I. 1.

PAUL, who hath the honour to be *an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ*, sent forth with a special commission from him to publish his gospel and attest his resurrection to the world, and set apart to this important office *by the* sovereign and gracious *will of God*, who hath interposed in so extraordinary a manner to form him for it and to employ him in it, addresseth this epistle *to the saints who are at Ephesus, even to the faithful in Christ Jesus*,[a] who believe in him as

SECT. I. Ephes. I. 1.

[a] *To the faithful in Christ Jesus.*] Some have understood this as an intimation that the Christians at Ephesus were remarkably *faithful to Christ* in relying on him alone for salvation, without that attachment to the *Mosaic law* which was to be found in some other churches, and particularly among the Galatians. But

SECT. I. the only Saviour, and in consequence of their persuasion of the truth of his gospel, are solemnly and truly devoted to the service of God. This is the character in which he looks upon you, and with the most affectionate concern and value for you, it is his ardent wish and most sincere and hearty prayer, that the richest abundance of Divine *grace* and favour may [*be*] communicated *to you*, with all the happiness *and peace* attending it, *from God our Father*, who is the great Original of all desirable blessings, *and* [*from*] *the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom they flow down to us sinful creatures.

Ephes. I. 2.

2 Grace *be* to you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 At the first turning of my thoughts towards you as converts to the gospel, when I set myself to think of the happy state into which you are brought, as true believers in the Son of God, by this glorious dispensation of Divine grace, with whatever personal sorrows and afflictions I may be pressed, I cannot forbear bursting out into songs of praise. Join with me therefore, my dear Christian brethren, and let us all say from our hearts, *Blessed* [*be*] *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[b] *who* is now through him become our God and Father, and *hath blessed us*,[c] even all that are partakers of his grace, whether Jews or Gentiles, *with every spiritual blessing in heavenly* [*things*] *in Christ*,[d] having

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

as he uses the same title when addressing the Colossians, (Col. i. 2.) whom yet he reproves on this very account, (Col. ii. 16, 20.) I can lay no stress upon that criticism.

[b] *Blessed be the God and Father*, &c.] The length of periods frequently occurring in the writings of St. Paul is one thing in his style that contributes much to the obscurity of it; of which this sentence, which runs on through twelve verses to the end of this section, is a remarkable instance. But in the paraphrase it is absolutely necessary to break it into many, or otherwise the period would be drawn out to a much more inconvenient length, and the words added to illustrate particular clauses would encumber, deform, and obscure the whole. —I have been obliged to take the same method in many other places, and hope I need make no farther apology for doing it.

[c] *Hath blessed us*] It is evident that the apostle means in the word [*us*] to include the Ephesians to whom he wrote, the greatest part of whom were Gentile converts, as sharing with him and the Jewish Christians in their evangelical privileges: and by thus beginning his epistle with ascribing thanks to God for his mercies to them, he at once declares his firm persuasion of the *calling of the Gentiles*, and his hearty joy in it.

[d] *With every spiritual blessing in heavenly* [*things*] *in Christ.*] The apostle every where represents the *graces of the Spirit* as so much preferable to its *gifts*, that it appears very surprising that Dr. Whitby should expound the blessings here intended as referring entirely to those gifts. They manifestly take in *every spiritual blessing*, (for so it is expressed in the original, πασῃ πνευματικῃ ευλογιᾳ,) and principally must refer, not to extraordinary and miraculous *gifts*, but to the sanctifying and saving *graces* of the Spirit; such as effectual calling, justification by

graciously bestowed upon us, in him, and for his sake, by the operation of his Holy Spirit, whatever may conduce to the happiness of our souls now, whatever may prepare them for eternal glory, and may seal to us the joyful hope and expectation of it. SECT. 1. Ephes. i. 3.

4 According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love:

Now this is all to be considered, not as what we can pretend to have deserved, but as the result of his free grace, and the accomplishment of his eternal purpose of love concerning us, *according as he hath chosen us in him*,[e] even in his well-beloved Son, *before the foundation of the world* was laid; always intending *that we should be* in all respects *holy and unblameable before him*, and especially that we should walk *in love*,[f] that, 4

grace, the adoption of children, the illumination of the Spirit, and all the graces of the Christian life, which are common unto all believers, and are communicated to them in all their several branches. And these are blessings *in the heavenlies*, *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*, or *in heavenly things*, (as I would choose to render it, rather than *places*) as they are things that have a manifest relation and respect to heaven, and have a tendency to fit us for it, and to lead us, not to seek after the enjoyments of this present world, but to be conversant about, and to be waiting for those of the heavenly state.

[e] *Hath chosen us in him.*] I think the apostle here cannot be understood to intimate that *every one* of the persons who belonged to the church of the Ephesians (or elsewhere to other Christian societies,) in the bonds of external communion, was by a particular decree of God *personally chosen* to eternal life, and to persevering holiness as the way to it. For he could have no evidence that this was the case with regard to each, without such a revelation as I think none have pretended, and as would very ill agree with other passages relating to the apostacy of some who once made a very forward profession, and with the many exhortations and cautions which every where occur in his writings, or with the declarations Christ had made concerning the final ruin that would in fact attend many who called themselves Christians, and some who bore the highest offices in the church, and wrought the most extraordinary works. (Compare Matt. vii. 22, 24; and Luke xiii. 26, 27.) I conclude therefore that he speaks of whole societies in general as consisting of saints and believers, because this was the predominant character, and he had reason in the judgment of charity to believe the greater part were such, (compare Phil. i. 7.) Nor did he always judge it necessary to make exceptions in reference to a few hypocrites who crept in among them, any more than Christ judged it so to speak of Judas as excluded, when he mentions the twelve thrones of judgment on which the apostles should sit, (Mat. xix. 28.) In this view he says of them in general, that whether they were Jews or Gentiles they were indiscriminately *chosen*, not only to those present privileges which they all as professing Christians enjoyed, but to real holiness and everlasting glory. And, as we are sure there were at Ephesus many Jewish converts who were in full communion with the church, I can see no reason at all, with some commentators of great name, to limit what the apostle says here to the Gentiles. An address to them alone in this epistle would very little suit that candour and love so prevalent in the heart of St. Paul, and so essential to every true Christian. The pious professor Franckius thinks the apostle speaks only of the Jews, till he comes to the 13th verse; but from note [b] below, on ver. 9, it will appear that he must be mistaken in this singularity of interpretation.

[f] *In love.*] This is often insisted upon; and perhaps the rather, to intimate that, now *the middle wall of partition was broken down*, it was of the highest importance to cultivate *natural affection* without any regard to the singularity of the Jewish or Gentile character.

66837

SECT. I. by the exercise of this sacred affection to God and each other, we might be preserved from the evils which abound in the world, and animated to the most worthy, honourable, and useful behaviour. To this we know God hath appointed us; let us therefore, in proportion to the degree in which we find this temper prevailing in us, look back with delight to those gracious purposes which the blessed God formed in his own all-comprehending mind concerning us long before we had a being; and let us contemplate and rejoice in him, as *having predestinated us to the adoption of children*, and fore-ordained us to be received into his family *by Jesus Christ*, in whom he has chosen us for a peculiar people *unto himself*, and thereby entitled us, not only to the most valuable privileges by which his church on earth is distinguished, but to an inheritance of eternal glory. And surely when we compare so happy a state and hope with our own temper, character, and deserts, we must acknowledge our appointment to it to have been *according to the good pleasure of his will*, and ascribe it entirely to the overflowings of his mercy.

Ephes. I. 4.

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 May we therefore ever acknowledge it *to the praise of his glorious grace*, which we can never sufficiently admire, and which the whole world should concur to magnify and adore; even that grace, *wherein he hath made us accepted*, and hath regarded us as the object of his favour and complacency, *in the* Lord Jesus Christ, as his first and best *beloved* Son; through whom, though in ourselves we are so unworthy of it, we have received the adoption; And *in whom we have redemption* from the power of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and the final wrath and displeasure of God, *through* the pouring forth of *his blood* upon the cross, when he undertook the great and awful work of making an atonement for us by the sacrifice of himself: for by this precious stream it is, as flowing from his wounded side, *the* full and free *remission of* all our most numerous and aggravated *sins* is happily conveyed unto us on our believing in him, *according to the* inexhaustible *riches of his grace*, which reaches even beyond the extent of all our most heinous

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved:

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,

T8808

transgressions, and where our guilt had risen to the most fearful height hath its superior triumphs. *In* the displays of *which* grace we must also acknowledge that *he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence;*[g] having with infinite wisdom contrived a way to glorify all his attributes in the salvation of men, even those which seemed to have the most different claims, dispensing mercy in a way of judgment, and awakening an humble awe and reverence in the soul by the very method which is used for granting pardon and peace.

SECT. I. Eph. I. 8.

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

All these admirable and gracious purposes hath God been pleased to unite, and to discover in the way of our salvation; *having made known unto us*, by the revelation of that gospel of which I have the honour and happiness of being an apostle, *the* long concealed *mystery of his will*,[h] *according to his* own sovereign *good pleasure* and free grace, *which he had before purposed in himself*, even the important design of gathering to himself, out of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, one holy and glorious church. This was his grand design, which all his other dispensations of providence and grace in former ages were intended more properly to introduce; *that in the economy of the fulness of the times*, or when that time was fully come which he in his wise appointment and distribution of things had judged most suitable and eligible, *he might reunite under one head all things in Christ*, whom he hath constituted sovereign of angels and men, and of all his dominions and subjects, *both which are in heaven and which are on earth*,[i]

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him:

[g] *In all wisdom and prudence.*] To understand this as a very celebrated commentator does, of *their own prudent returns* to be made to the Divine goodness, seems a sense much below the apostle's meaning.

[h] *The mystery of his will.*] It is so called, as *having long been kept a secret*, of which neither Jews nor Gentiles had any conception till it was revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles. I think this plainly proves that Professor Francius is mistaken in referring the word [*us*] to the Jews; for the *mystery* of *calling the Gentiles* was not for a considerable time *made known* to the converted Jews, and when it was declared by the apostles, it was difficult for them fully to submit to it.

[i] *Both in heaven and on earth.*] This is considered by some as a Jewish phrase to express *the whole world*; and Mr. Locke thinks it may be equivalent to Jews and Gentiles, (compare Dan. viii. 10.) But it seems more reasonable to understand it of bringing *angels* as well as *men* under the government of Christ. (Compare Col. i. 16, 20; Eph. iii. 10; Phil. ii. 10.) The word ανακεφαλαιωσθαι must, in its most literal signification, express *uniting*

SECT. 1.

that for his glory and the good of the whole society he should with supreme authority preside over all. And thus in Christ hath he united all things, [*even*] *in him* who is the Head of all; *in whom also we have obtained an inheritance*,[k] and the hope of complete and everlasting felicity; *having been* graciously *predestinated* to it *according to the purpose of him, who* by an efficacious, though gentle and often imperceptible, influence, *worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will*;[l] and, having formed all his schemes with infinite wisdom, takes the most sure and suitable means to execute them, and to subdue in the minds of men, as he has subdued in mine, the strongest prejudices against them. And not I alone, but all who of Jews are become believers in Christ, must acknowledge this to have been the case, and must consider it as laying us under the highest obligations, *that we should be* entirely devoted *to the praise of his glory*, and to the purposes of his service for ever: even we, *who first trusted in* the power and promise of *Christ*[m] for salvation, and many of us ventured our souls upon him, when his name was unknown to the Gentile nations, and to most of our own countrymen was the object of contempt and abhorrence.

Eph. i. 11.

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

again under one Head. Both *angels* and *men* were at first in sweet and harmonious *subjection* to the *Son of God*, the great Creator of both; but *man* having broke himself off from the society, the *Son of man* by his humiliation and sufferings *recovers all* who believe in him, and in his human nature *presides over the kingdom* to which in the world of glory they and his angels belong. This interpretation presents so noble a view, that no other will bear a comparison.

[k] *We have obtained an inheritance.*] Mr. Locke would render it, *we are become his inheritance*, alluding to Deut. xxxii. 9, *The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance*;) and interprets it as referring to the admission of the Gentiles into the *church*, which is *God's heritage*: but, as [*we*] in this and the next verse seems opposed to [*you*] in the thirteenth, it must signify the Jews who *first trusted in Christ*, or the body of the *Christian church*, who were incorporated long before the Ephesians were brought into it.

[l] *Who worketh all things agreeably to the counsel of his own will.*] This does indeed express God's taking such methods to answer his purposes as he knows will in fact be successful. But it does not prove any thing like an overbearing impulse on men's minds to determine them in such a manner as to destroy the natural freedom of their volitions, and so to prevent their being justly accountable to for God such actions.

[m] *Who first trusted in Christ.*] I think it strange that Mr. Locke should urge this as an argument to prove that the apostle speaks of the Gentiles; since it is so evident that the grand harvest of believing Jews was gathered into the church before Christ was preached to any of the Gentiles. To interpret the word προηλπικότας as signifying that they *first began to hope in Christ*, or had *first entertained hope* through him, whereas before they had *no hope*, (Eph. ii. 12.) loses the force of the expression, and sinks the sense of the Greek language.

SECT. 1.

13 In whom ye also *trusted* after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

The powerful efficacy of the same grace hath likewise been displayed in you, and hath given you a title to the same inheritance in Christ; *in whom ye also*, who were once sinners of the Gentiles, even ye Ephesians, who were particularly devoted to idolatry and superstition, (compare Acts xix. 19. 35.) to a degree which distinguished you from many of your heathen neighbours, [*trusted*] and believed as we had done, *when ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation*, which brings the good tidings of salvation to you as well as others, and gives the most convincing demonstrations of your being called to share in all the blessings that are bestowed in Christ: *in whom also, having believed* and made profession of your faith, *ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise*, descending upon you, not only in miraculous gifts, but in its sanctifying graces, to attest that you belong to the family of God; and are heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed. I 14 speak of that blessed and gracious Spirit, *who is the earnest of our inheritance*,[n] in whom you have a certain pledge and token of your being by special adoption entitled to it, to encourage and animate you under all the difficulties of your way, while you continue waiting *till* you receive *the* complete *redemption of the* people he hath so dearly *purchased* for his *possession*:[o] to them he hath promised everlasting life and happiness, and he will certainly bestow it upon them in the day of his final appearance, which will at length

Ephes. I. 13.

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession,

[n] *The earnest of our inheritance.*] It seems very unnatural to explain this as Mr. Locke does, of *our being God's inheritance*, for the *earnest* must certainly refer to *future blessings*, and be intended as a pledge and token of our right and title to them.

[o] *Till the redemption of the purchased possession.*] Dr. Whitby would render this clause εις απολυτρωσιν της περιποιησεως, *till the redemption of life*; and brings many texts out of the Septuagint, where περιποιεω signifies to *save alive*. To illustrate this, he observes, there are two *redemptions* or grand *deliverances*, (for that is plainly his idea of *redemption*;) the one, that of *justification*, consequent upon believing; the other, that by which we are delivered from *death*, and all the other penal consequences of sin, in *the redemption of the body* from corruption that it may partake of eternal life. (Compare Rom. viii. 23.) This nearly coincides with Beza's interpretation, who would translate it, *till the redemption of vindication*, that is, till we are set entirely at liberty, and receive complete deliverance and salvation. But I rather conclude that περιποιησις here signifies *the people* whom Christ has *purchased* to be *his peculiar property*; which is very agreeable to the signification of the word elsewhere. Compare Mal. iii. 17, Septuag. (where it answers to סגלה *Segullah*.) Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 13; and 1 Pet. ii. 9.

SECT. I. open with a lustre that shall fully repay so long an expectation, and will abundantly conduce *to the praise of his glory*, or to the illustration of that wisdom and love which hath wrought in every previous dispensation, to lead on by the properest degrees towards that most illustrious one which was to close the whole.

Ephes. I. 14 unto the praise of his glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 3 ARE we not by Divine grace and mercy partakers of those blessings which Paul here celebrates with so much delight, and in the review of which, familiar as they were to his thoughts and discourses, he breaks forth as it were into a rapturous anthem in the very beginning of this epistle, as he likewise does in so many others? Ought not our hearts to be as warm in such devout acknowledgments? Are *spiritual blessings in heavenly things* or *places in Christ Jesus* less valuable now than they were *seventeen hundred* years ago? Are not the necessities of our souls the same? Is not their immortality the same? Let us then join with the most grateful sentiments in the acclamation; and, in proportion to the degree in which we feel the importance of what God hath already done, and is doing for our souls, let us go back 4 with unutterable pleasure to the gracious purpose which he was pleased to form in his own compassionate breast, when he chose 5 us in Christ before the foundation of the world, when he predestinated us through him to the adoption of children. Let us ac- 11 knowledge the freedom of his grace in it, that we are thus *predestinated according to the purpose of him*, who with proper regard to the nature of his intelligent and free creatures, *worketh all things agreeably to the good pleasure of his will*, and *maketh us* 6 *accepted in the Beloved*, that we may be *to the praise of the glory of his grace*.

8 Let these united displays of wisdom and love affect our hearts; for he hath indeed abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. And let that holiness which mingles its glories in the whole scheme, be also remembered. Let it never be forgotten, 4 that we are predestinated to be holy and without blame before him in love, that we might attain to that blameless temper which love alone can inspire and support.

9 For this purpose the mystery of his will is made known to us, and that grand illustrious plan is displayed, which is so well wor- 10 thy of all the perfections of a God; even his design to gather together in one all things in Christ, to unite all good and happy spirits under him as the common Head, and to make him the bond of their eternal union to God and to each other. What are we sinful creatures, that we should be received into such an association? Let us never forget it on earth, as we shall for ever

commemorate it in heaven, that it is through his blood that we have redemption: eternal redemption, which he who has begun the happy work will certainly complete, in favour of those whom he hath purchased to be an everlasting possession unto himself. SECT. I. Ver. 8.

In the mean time, may his Spirit be given us as the seal of 14
the promises, and the earnest of our inheritance! And by more 15
abundant communications of his sanctifying influences, may he raise our souls to a blessed anticipation of those enjoyments which will endure for ever, and will be for ever new and delightful.

SECT. II.

The apostle assures the Ephesians of the fervency with which he was offering his prayers to God on their account, that they might have still higher and worthier conceptions of the gospel, and of its glorious Author as raised from the dead, and exalted to supreme dominion in the heavenly world. Eph. I. 15, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS I. 15.

EPHES. I. 15. WHEREFORE I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

I HAVE mentioned the invaluable blessings of which as Christians we have the privilege to be partakers, whether Jews or Gentiles; and *for this cause*, knowing the extensive views on which the Christian church is formed, in the affectionate remembrance which I have of all the faithful, *I also* bear you on my heart, both in the praises and the prayers which I offer up to God; *having* in this my confinement *heard of* your stedfastness in *the faith you have in the Lord Jesus*[a], whom we adore as our common Saviour, *and of the love* [*you bear*] *to all the saints*, whether circumcised or uncircumcised: On which account I *cease not* daily *to give thanks for you*, that you are brought by Divine grace into this

SECT. II. Ephes. I. 15.

16 Cease not to give thanks for you,

16

[a] *Having heard of the faith you have*, &c. ακουσας την καθ' ὑμας πιστιν.] Some have argued from hence, that this epistle, if directed to the Ephesians, must have been written before Paul's long abode at Ephesus, since he would not have spoken of *their faith* as only known *by report*, if he had for two years and an half been conversant with them, and seen the effects of it. To this some have answered, by pleading that ακουω signifies, not only *to hear*, but *to understand*, by whatever means the knowledge be attained; and others have said that this epistle was intended, not only for the church of Ephesus but for other Asian churches in the neighbourhood. But perhaps the easiest and most solid answer is, that as it was now five or six years since Paul quitted Ephesus, he might judge it proper thus to express his complacency on *hearing* that they *continued*, in the midst of so many circumstances of temptation, to behave in a manner so worthy what he had personally observed among them. In this sense Mr. Locke understands these words; and it is illustrated by comparing Phil. i. 3, 27; and 1 Thess. i. 5, 6; iii. 6.

SECT. II.

happy state, and am *making mention of you* always *in my prayers*, which I am continually presenting to heaven for my brethren in every place

making mention of you in my prayers.

Ephes. I. 17.

And it is my constant request for you, *that the God* and Father *of our Lord Jesus Christ*, who is also *the Father of glory*, of which he is eternally and immutably possessed, from whom all glory proceeds, and to whom it returns, *would give you* more abundant supplies of *the spirit of wisdom and revelation*, to fill you with a more enlarged knowledge of his will, and animate you to the further exercise of every grace *in the*

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him:

18 *acknowledgement of him:* And in particular, that by his influence and teaching he [*would give you*] to have *the eyes of your understanding enlightened* still more and more[b]; *that*, being thus illuminated, *ye may know*, in a more comprehensive manner than you now do, *what is the* great and important *hope of his calling*, what are the high conceptions you should have of that excellent Object which the gospel proposes to your pursuit, and with what certainty and delight you should look forward to it, and may discern more fully what are the inexpressible advantages, *and what the glorious riches* and inestimable treasures *of his inheritance in the saints*, which he distributes with so liberal a hand among them in the blessings of his grace at present, in consequence of having adopted them to himself, and which hereafter they shall possess in perfect happiness and glory, and shall for ever enjoy with him and with each other:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 *And* that you may be thus more thoroughly sensible *what* [*is*] *the exceeding greatness of his power* which he hath manifested in the operations of his grace *towards us who* cordially *believe* his gospel, *according to the energy of the power of his might*[c], influencing our hearts in

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power;

[b] *The eyes of your understanding enlightened.*] Our translation here, though it express the sense, departs from the construction of the original, in which these words are in the *accusative case*, συνιδησιν, &c. and appears to be governed by the verb δωη in the preceding verse. And therefore, to preserve the same construction, I have repeated here the words [*would give you*], which are inserted as a supplement.

[c] *The exceeding greatness of his power*, &c.] The admirable beauty of this passage, and the strong emphasis and force of the expressions in the original, are well set forth by Bishop Pearson (on the Creed, p. 519), as scarcely to be paralleled in any author, and superior to what the

SECT. II.

such a manner, as effectually to conquer all our prejudices against Christianity, and against true religion in every form.

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right-hand in the heavenly *places*.

This is indeed a power, like that which is the confirmation of our faith, as being the authentic seal of the gospel, set to it by that energy *which he exerted in* his Son Jesus *Christ*, when he lay a cold and mangled corpse in the sepulchre, *in raising him from the dead*, and thus declaring him to be the Son of God with power (Rom. i. 4.); *and* by which too he *seated* [*him*] *at his own right-hand in heavenly* [*places*], in the possession of the highest dignity and glory; Having exalted him *far above all* the ranks in the angelic world, even above every *principality, and power, and might, and dominion*, however they are distinguished in the celestial hierarchy, *and* above *every name*, how honourable soever, *that is named*, or had in any account, *not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*; so that there never has been, and never shall be, among all the inhabitants of heaven or earth, any one so dear and excellent, so high and honourable, in the sight of God as he is. And it is delightful to pursue the meditation; reflecting farther, that the Divine power hath not only invested our ascended Saviour with supreme dignity, but likewise with universal authority; *and hath subjected all things* whatsoever *under his feet*, that he may overrule and manage them as he will, *and given him* [*to be*] supreme *Head over all things to the church*, for its protection, benefit, and advantage: Even that church *which is his body*, and which as such is ever dear and precious to him, and, being made complete in him, is regarded as *the fulness of him who filleth all* persons *in all* places[d] with all kind of good things which they possess, and yet delights in this as his chosen dwelling, even as an holy temple which he hath consecrated to himself.

Ephes. I. 20.

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him *to be* the Head over all things to the church.

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

language can reach. See also Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 307.

[d] *The fulness of him who filleth all in all.*] Mr. Locke understands this as if it were said, *which is completed*, or completely filled *by him*, &c. and I think the texts he refers to in confirmation of this sense are of great weight, and have paraphrased the text accordingly; though it is certain that the word πληρωμα has sometimes another sense; as when we are said to *receive from Christ's fulness*, John i. 16, and Christ is declared to have *all the fulness of Deity dwelling in him*. Col. ii. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. II. Verse 15

FAITH in Christ, and love to all the saints, are here with great propriety put by the apostle for the whole of a Christian temper. May they be more apparent and operative in all who call themselves by the Christian name! Even a firm and active faith, a warm and unbounded love, which shall forget every thing that would alienate our hearts from our brethren; and only remember, that they are saints, consecrated to God, and sanctified by him;

22 that they are believers in Christ Jesus, and therefore one with him, who is our Head, and our All; whose love hath given to us, and to them, whatever is lovely in either: who will save the whole body, and make it so happy together, that the very thought of that happiness should cause our hearts to overflow with every benevolent affection, as well as with perpetual gratitude, to our Divine Deliverer, who is the source of it.

Let us learn by this excellent and pathetic prayer of the apostle what are the most important petitions we can offer for our-

18 selves and our Christian friends. Surely this must be numbered among them, that the eyes of our understandings may be enlightened more and more, that so we may more clearly and affectionately know what is the great and glorious hope which our Christian calling sets before us. Alas, as yet we know but little of it! but little of that great and glorious inheritance which God will divide among his saints, and in the enjoyment of which he will for ever unite them all. But adored be his grace if we so know it as deliberately to make choice of it, as to give up every interest and hope inconsistent with it, and determinately to say, *This is our rest, we have desired it;* (Psal. cxxxii. 14.)

19, 20 *He who hath wrought us to the self-same thing, is God;* (2 Cor. v. 5.) It is indeed an exertion of a Divine power, that quickened these dead souls of ours; the same, that quickened the dead body of our Redeemer, quickened, exalted, and glorified him. Let our souls, like that of the apostle, presently take the hint, and soar upward, as with an eagle's, or rather an angel's wing;

11 soar to those glorious abodes, where he *sits at the right-hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named.* There he reigns, not only as the sovereign Guardian of the universe, but in the more en-

22, 23 dearing character of the Head of the church, bearing the same tender affection to it, exerting the same care over it, as the head over the members; calling the church, narrow as its boundaries seem, his fulness, though he fills all in all.

"Blessed Lord! Fill our souls more and more with all the "graces of thy Spirit, and extend the boundaries of the church "all abroad! Unite us in these dearest bonds; and give us al-

" ways to act worthy of *that honour* which thou conferrest upon " us, when thou callest us *thy body, thy flesh, and thy bones!*" (Ephesians v. 30.)

SECT. III.

Farther to excite the gratitude of the Ephesians, the apostle leads them back to that state of moral death in which the gospel found them, and reminds them how entirely they were saved by Divine grace. Eph. II. 1—10.

EPHESIANS II. 1.

EPHES. II. 1. AND you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

UNSPEAKABLE, my brethren, is the happiness of the body of Christ, which I have just been mentioning, the happiness of all who are related to him as their glorious Head: *and* through Divine Grace this happiness is yours; for *you*, though once sinners of the Gentiles, [*hath he*] who raised up Christ from the dead [*quickened*] and raised to life,[a] by the effectual working of that mighty power which I have shewn you to have wrought in Christ; even you, *who* will (as I persuade myself) most readily acknowledge, that you long *were dead in trespasses and sins*, incapable of any sensations and actions arising from that spiritual and Divine life to which his grace has now awakened you, and liable, as the just desert and consequence of your sins, to a sentence of eternal death. Such, it is manifest, was your wretched state, while you continued in the paths of vanity and guilt, *in which ye formerly walked* with pleasure,[b] *ac-*

SECT. III. Ephes. II. 1

2 Wherein in time past ye walked ac-

[a] *You hath he quickened.*] Some have observed that the connection here is harsh, the words [*hath he quickened*] not being in the original, and would therefore suppose the accusative case ὑμας (as the grammarians call it) to be governed by the verb συνεκαθισε understood, answering to the close of the preceding chapter; and thus would take the sense to be, "He who "*filleth all his members* with all gifts and "virtues, hath also *filled you* among the "rest." But the words ὑμας ὀντας νεκρους in this first verse, so directly answer to ὑμας ὀντας νεκρους in the fifth, that I think it very plain both must refer to συνεζωοποιησε, *he hath quickened together with Christ.*—This is one instance, among others, of Paul's beginning a sentence and then throwing in a very long parenthesis, and taking up again at a considerable distance the words with which he began, or nearly the same. Compare Eph. iii. 1, 14, with chap. iv. 1; and 1 Tim. i. 3, with ver. 18.

[b] *In which ye formerly walked.*] Dr. Goodwin very pertinently observes here, that the Ephesians were remarkable, in the midst of all their learning, for a most abandoned character. They banished Hermodorus merely for his virtue, thereby in effect making a law that every modest and temperate man should leave them. See Dr. Goodwin's Works, Vol. I. p. 7.

SECT. III. Eph. II. 2

cording to the course and manner *of this* present *world*, in a conformity to the common usage of the age in which you live, and to the fashionable enormities of your heathen neighbours; a course so detestably evil, that I may properly say of it, that it was just *according to* the desire, instigation, and will, of *the prince of the power of the air*,[c] that wicked spirit who commands the legions of fallen angels, that by Divine permission range in the air, and fly from place to place in pursuit of their pernicious purpose of corrupting and destroying mankind. I say it again, your course was formerly according to the dictates and suggestions of that cursed and malignant spirit, who by his influence on the hearts of men has in effect the management, however unseen and unapprehended, *of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience*,[d] and prejudices their darkened minds against admitting the evidence and authority of the gospel.

cording to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.

3 *Amongst whom also we all had formerly*, at least in some degree, *our* course of life and *conversation*,[e] whatever our education or religious profession might have been; walking in many instances, *in the* unbridled *lusts of our flesh*, to the base appetites of which we were enslaved, so as to forget the true dignity and happiness of a

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of

[c] *The prince of the power of the air.*] This refers to a Jewish tradition that the air was inhabited by *evil spirits*; a notion which as Mr. Mede observes (Diat. on 2 Pet. ii. 4,) the apostle Paul seems to approve.

[d] *Of the spirit that now operates powerfully in the children of disobedience.*] I render it [*of the Spirit,*] as this agrees better with the construction of the original τοῦ πνεύματος—τοῦ ἐνεργοῦντος &c. which leads us to refer this latter clause to the prevailing influence of Satan over the vicious *spirit* or *corrupt disposition* that is so powerful in sinners, which is thus represented as *subject to his management*, and actuated by him.—The phrase ὑιοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας, is very strong and emphatical both in the denomination it gives to the heathen as *children of rebellion* and obstinacy, who would *yield to no persuasion* that would urge them to a better course of life, as the etymology of ἀπειθὴς imports; and in the forcible manner in which it expresses the influence of Satan over them, as if they were inspired and possessed by him; for it is well known, the word ἐνεργούμενοι among the ancients signified the same with *demoniacs*.

[e] *We all had formerly our conversation.*] The apostle, changing the expression from [*ye*] *Ephesians* to [*we,*] seems plainly to declare that he meant to include *himself* and *all other Christians* in what he here says: and it is so professedly the design of the beginning of his epistle to the Romans to prove that the Jews had not, in point of justification, any advantage above the Gentiles, (Rom. iii. 9,) that it is surprising to me that some very learned and ingenious writers, and Mr. Locke in particular, should contend so strongly for the contrary. As to the argument from Eph. iv. 17—20, see the paraphrase and notes there, in the beginning of § viii.

our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

rational and immortal spirit. Thus we went on, *fulfilling the dictates of the flesh, and of the* inordinate *passions*[f] of the carnal mind, as if we had been altogether destitute of any superior power to controul them; *and* howsoever we might pride ourselves in any distinction of birth, or separation by peculiar privileges from the rest of the world, we *were* indeed *by nature*, and according to the bias we were naturally under, *the children of wrath*,[g] and heirs of the curse denounced on sin, *even as others* round us are: we too, as well as they, were born in sin, and, in consequence of that innate corruption, were early plunged in actual transgressions, and so brought under a sentence of death and destruction by that law which every soul of us had in various instances violated.

SECT. III.

Ephes. II. 3.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

This was the common calamity in which we were all involved; *but* the blessed *God being rich in mercy*, and finding the motives of it in himself, when there was nothing in us but misery to move him to it *according to his great* and free *love wherewith he hath loved us*, hath been pleased to look upon us with pity, and to contrive a most astonishing and effectual way for our recovery from this deplorable state: And in prosecution of it, *even when we were*, as I had before observed, *dead in trespasses* and sins,[h] he *hath quickened* and enlivened *us together with Christ*,[i] having constituted by his

4

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ

5

[f] *The dictates of the flesh and of the passions.*] The word διανοια, here made use of, expresses a kind of *dictatorial* power: and the plural διανοιαι, which we render *mind*, as it cannot here signify its *intellectual powers*, must, I think, denote the various passions, according to the prevalence of which our minds take as it were different colours and forms, and become strangely different from themselves.

[g] *Were by nature the children of wrath.*] Some think the meaning of this phrase is only that we were so *truly and indeed*. Compare Gal. iv. 8. (See Limborch. Theol. lib. iii. cap. 4, § 17.) But, on the whole, I think it much more reasonable to refer it to the original apostacy and corruption, in consequence of which men do, according to the course of nature, fall early into personal guilt, and so become obnoxious to the Divine displeasure. And [*we all*,] in the beginning of this verse, is so plainly opposed to [*ye*] in the verse before, that it is astonishing Dr. Whitby should maintain that [*we*] and [*ye*] are used promiscuously throughout this whole discourse. Monsieur Le Clerc, (Ars. Crit. p. 104.) brings many instances from ancient writers to prove that φυσις signifies *genius* or *disposition*: but I think I may venture to say that every one of them signifies a *natural* disposition, and not merely an *acquired* habit.

[h] *When we are dead in trespasses* and sins.] What is said in Col. ii. 13, does indeed shew that this was eminently the case of the Gentiles; but I have given my reasons above why I think it here to be spoken of what all in general were till the grace of God wrought for their recovery.

[i] *Hath quickened us together with Christ.*] This does not merely signify our being raised to the hope of pardon and glory

SECT. III.

grace such a near relation between us, that his renewed life should be the source of ours: for it is *by* that *grace*, which is bestowed in him, that *ye are saved*, and made partakers of these invaluable privileges. *And* in consequence of this I may farther say, that he *hath raised* [*us*] *up together* in him as our Head and Representative; *and* by admitting him into heaven as a forerunner, to take possession of those glorious mansions for us, he hath *made* [*us*] *sit together in* those *heavenly* [*places*] to which he is exalted, and into which we also may be said to be admitted *in Christ Jesus:* for by means of that relation between him and us which Divine grace hath established, we may look upon his resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God as the certain pledge and security of ours; and regarding him under the character of a public person, who is thus raised and exalted in our name, we may be said to share in those felicities and dignities which are conferred on him.

(by grace ye are saved;)

Ephes. II. 5.

6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus;

6

7 And this God hath done, *that he might shew in the ages to come* under the dispensation of the gospel, and might display to all succeeding generations, *the exceeding riches of his* free and unmerited *grace*, as manifested both to Jews and Gentiles *in* [*his*] *kindness towards us in Christ Jesus;* for we have received it all by him, and are partakers of it as connected with him, whom God hath appointed a Head and Saviour to us, and taught us to regard him as our great Representative.

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in *his* kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus:

8 I repeat it again and again, that I may properly inculcate a doctrine of so great importance; *for* I would never have any of you forget, that it is *by* this free *grace*, which I have so frequently celebrated, and would for ever celebrate, that *ye are* brought into the happy num-

8 For by grace are

by the resurrection and ascension of Christ: but seems to refer to that union which there is between him and all true believers, by virtue of which they may look on his resurrection, ascension, and glory, as a pledge and security of something quite of a similar nature to be accomplished in due time in and upon them. Thus we are taught to consider Christ as a public person, the elder brother of the family, and the Guardian of the younger branches of it, who may, by a very easy and beautiful figure, be said to have *received their inheritance in him.*—It is justly observed by Mr. Locke, that chap. i. 20, and ii. 5, 6, answer to each other: but the apostle's mind being filled with these grand ideas, and transported with love to Christ, lets his pen run loose to enlarge upon them, though with some interruption to the natural construction.

ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God:

ber of the *saved* ones, and are delivered from that ruin into which sin had plunged you, and raised to these glorious hopes of eternal felicity; which inestimable privileges we receive *through* such a cordial *faith* in Christ, as is productive of unfeigned love and obedience: *and* the grace of God appears, not only in constituting this method of salvation through faith, but also in producing this great and Divine principle in our souls; for *this* very faith is *not of yourselves*,[k] it is not of your own production, there being such a natural averseness to it in the heart, as that we neither can be said to have wrought it, nor is any praise resulting from it, or any excellence in it, to be ultimately ascribed to us; but [*it is*] really *the gift of God*, who by the gracious influence of his Spirit fixes our attention to the great objects of it, subdues our prejudices against it, awakens holy affections in our souls, and, on the whole, enables us to believe, and to persevere in believing, till we receive the great end of our faith in the complete salvation of our souls.

SECT. III. Ephes. II. 8.

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast:

9 And God hath appointed, that salvation should be thus obtained, by that faith which he produces in the heart, and *not by works* of the Mosaic law, or any other obedience of our own, *lest any one should boast*, as if he had by his own righteousness obtained salvation, and so should ascribe the glory of it to himself rather than to

10 For we are his

10 God. But it cannot be so now; *for* as all acts of acceptable obedience proceed from faith, and

[k] *By grace ye are saved through faith; and this not of yourselves.*] It is observable, that the apostle speaks of these Christians not only as the way to salvation, but as already *saved* (σεσωσμενοι,) by a strong and lively figure expressing their happy security.—Some explain the following clause [*and this not of yourselves*,] as if it were only a repetition of what was said before, that the constitution that made faith the way to salvation was not of their own appointment, but God's. But this is making the apostle guilty of a flat tautology, for which there is no occasion. Taking the clause as we explain it, that is as asserting the *agency* of Divine *grace* in the production of *faith*, as well as in the constitution of the method of *salvation by it*, the thought rises with great spirit. As for the apostle's using the word τουτο in the neuter gender to signify *faith*, the thing he had just before been speaking of, there are so many similar instances to be found in scripture, that one would wonder how it were possible for any judicious critics to have laid so much stress on this as they do, in rejecting what seems beyond all comparison the weightiest and most natural interpretation. Compare the original of the following texts, Phil. i. 28; Eph. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 17; iv. 19. And for the like construction in other Greek authors of undoubted credit, see Elsner, Observ. Vol. I. p. 128; and Raphel. Annot. ex Herod, p. 186.

SECT. III.

Ephes. II. 10.

this faith is wrought in our hearts by the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit, it is most evident, that *we are* to acknowledge ourselves to be *his workmanship*, so far as there is any thing in us agreeable to the nature and will of God; being *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, and made able not only to perform them, but to delight in them; even those works of evangelical obedience, *to* the performance of *which*, (though we obtain the forgiveness of our sins previous to our performing them, on our accepting Christ and believing the grace of the gospel) *God hath before prepared* [*us*] by the influences of his Spirit;[1] having fore-ordained and appointed in his eternal counsels, and in the declarations of his word, *that we should* diligently and constantly *walk in them*, as ever we would approve ourselves his people, and stand entitled to the promised blessings of the future state, which indeed we can no otherwise in the nature of things be prepared to receive.

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold with a becoming attention, and with all those emotions of heart which an attentive review of it is capable of exciting, the amazing diversity of these states as represented by the apostle; and remember that they are states, in the one or the other of which we all are. We see what nature and the first Adam have made us; and we see what grace and an interest in the second would make us.

Verse 1. Daily observation, and, in too many instances, our own experience, may have convinced us, that it is not the character of the Gentiles alone to be *dead in trespasses and sins.* It shews us, that to walk *according to the* general *course of this* apostate *world*,
2 is to walk *according to the prince of the power of the air;* who, when he is most set on our ruin, is most importunate in persuading us to *fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*
3 Still, alas! till the gospel reaches and renews the heart doth the same evil spirit, by means of the corrupt and vicious spirit dwelling in them, work in the children of disobedience and wrath, in which number we must acknowledge ourselves by nature to

[1] *To which God hath before prepared us.*] This is plainly the sense of the original, εἰς περιεπάτησεν, which shews, that as we are *chosen to be holy*, (chap. i. 4.) and called to perform *good works*, (Tit. iii. 8.) so also God *prepares us for*, and enables us to it, by his grace.

have been. But, blessed be God, that grace has its superior triumph over *depraved nature;* and *where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound;* (Rom. v. 20.)

SECT. III.

Verse 4

The mercy of God is rich, and his love is great; and his powerful grace, to which we must ascribe all our hope of salvation, hath quickened us when we were dead in sins, and hath enlivened us with Christ, to whom by faith we are united, and so incorporated with him, that in consequence of it we may not only consider his resurrection and ascension to glory as an emblem, but in some degree as an anticipation, of our own, and may think and speak of ourselves as raised, and exalted, and glorified, with him. 5, 6

O how blessed and joyful a view is this! and how powerfully ought it to operate upon us, to elevate our minds above this low world, and to animate us to every great and generous sentiment and pursuit! Surely this must illustrate, if any thing can do it, the riches and freedom of that grace by which we are saved, and must engage the generations to come to celebrate his exceeding kindness towards us. Let all boasting in ourselves therefore be entirely given up: let salvation by faith be acknowledged to be of grace; and that faith itself be acknowledged as the gift of God, whose workmanship we are, and by whom we are created to that noble and only acceptable principle of good works. Let not this grace be received in vain; but let us answer the purposes of this new nature and new life which God hath graciously given us, and shew forth the praises of him from whom it is derived, and in whom, in a spiritual as well as a natural sense, we live, and move, and exist. 7 8, 9 10

SECT. IV.

The apostle farther pursues the argument begun in the last section, representing the happy state into which they were now brought, as united to the church of God, and partakers of all its privileges; the middle wall of partition being now removed in favour of believing Gentiles. Eph. II. 11, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS II. 11.

SECT. IV.

Ephes. II. 11.

WHEREFORE remember that YOU have heard of the glorious privileges to which, as Christians, you are exalted, out of that wretched state of moral death in which the gospel found you: *wherefore* let me seriously urge it upon you, that you would always *remember* and bear it in mind how happy a change God hath been pleased by his sovereign grace to make in your state, and would consider what you now are in comparison with what you for-

SECT. IV.

merly were. O let it never be forgotten, *that ye* [*were*] *formerly* ignorant, vicious and idolatrous *Gentiles*, and *in* a state wherein *the flesh* was continually leading you captive, and drawing you to gratify and fulfil its lust; *who* being thus abandoned to your own ways, without any sign or token of an interest in God, [*were*] *called*, by way of contempt, *the uncircumcision*, uncircumcised abominable sinners, *by that* body of men *which is called the circumcision*,[a] on account of their having received that rite which is *performed with hands*, and imprints a mark *in the flesh*, of which as you were destitute, they who had received and gloried in it avoided you as unclean. But I am sensible your chief misery did not consist in the want of that ceremony, which can by no means avail to the salvation of the soul, or render it, while the heart continues uncircumcised, in any degree acceptable to God: Your wretchedness was (and see that you remember it with the greatest humility, and with the most affecting sense of the acknowledgments you owe to that free grace which has delivered you from that deplorable condition,) *that ye were at that time*, while you were unregenerate Gentiles, *without* any knowledge of *Christ*, or any interest in him, and thus were destitute of all those blessings which he brings to his believing and obedient people: and indeed were without any expectations of the Messiah, and had not those advantages for inquiring after him and embracing him, which the Jews had by virtue of their prophecies, and of the various means ordained to point him out; ye were then *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and had no part in any of the favours granted to them, no claim to their peculiar privileges, nor any right of citizenship with them; not so much as knowing that polity which God had established among his own chosen people, in order to direct their views to the gospel, and

Ephes. II. 11.

ye *being* in time passed Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,

[a] *Called the uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision.*] The terms of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* in the abstract are here plainly put for *circumcised* and *uncircumcised*; as they are likewise Rom. ii. 26; iii. 30; and iv. 9. Thus also to be made *the righteousness of God* is put for being made *righteous by God*, 2 Cor. v. 21.

and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

to prepare them for the reception of it: and having no communion with the church, ye were then unacquainted with the Divine engagements to it, *and strangers to the covenants of promise*[b], not having any knowledge of the covenant made with Israel by Moses, or of those better promises on which the covenant with Abraham was established, and assurance given of the Messiah's coming, and of eternal life through him: so that, in consequence of this, ye were then wholly taken up in the pursuit of earthly things, without any prospect of good things to come, *having no* well grounded *hope* with regard to a future state[c], no hope of spiritual and eternal blessings, about which, immersed as you were in the cares and pleasures of this lower world, you had indeed but very little thought: *and* though you had such an infamous herd of imaginary deities, and were so eager in the worship of them, and particularly of your great goddess Diana, and of Jupiter, whose daughter she was supposed to be (Acts xix. 35.) yet in reality ye were *atheists in the world*[d], for ye lived and con-

SECT. IV.

Ephes. II. 12.

[b] *The covenants of promise.*] Though the *covenant* for substance was one and the same, the apostle here speaks of it in the *plural* number (as he does also Rom. ix. 4), as it was given out at several times, with various explications and enlargements, not only to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. xii. 2, 3; xvii. 7, 8; xxii. 17, 18; xxvi. 3, 4; xxviii. 13, 14), but afterwards to the whole church of Israel. (Exod. xxiv. 7, 8; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; xxix. 12, 13; and xxx. 5, 6.) And as the promises it contained, centered in the great promise of the Messiah, and of salvation by him, he therefore speaks of them in the *singular* number, but as one promise, which is agreeable to the scripture-style in other places. Compare Acts ii. 39; xiii. 32; xxvi. 6, 7; Rom. iv. 14, 16; Gal. iii. 17, 22; Eph. iii. 6; and Heb. vi. 17.

[c] *Having no hope.*] That the heathens had among them the doctrine of a *future state*, and that it was popularly taught and generally believed by the common people, must, I think, appear incontestible to any who are at all acquainted with antiquity. But it is as apparent that they reasoned very weakly upon the subject, that they had *no well grounded hope* of future *happiness*, and that they were but very little impressed with it; so that they had *no deity* to which they *prayed for eternal life*, as the fathers often remonstrate. And by far the greater part of their most learned philosophers either expressly *denied*, in private lectures to their pupils, the doctrine of *future rewards and punishments*, or taught *principles* quite *inconsistent* with it; as must, I think, plainly appear to any who will impartially peruse what Mr. Warburton has written upon the subject, so judiciously defended in the Critical Review.

[d] *Atheists in the world.*] Both the Christians and heathens, as Dr. Whitby well observes here, called each other atheists, though both worshipped *some deity* real or imaginary; because each supposed the other to reject that which was the *true object* of adoration. But I cannot conceive that the apostle would have given to the heathens the character of atheists, if the worship of the *one living and true God* had really prevailed among them to that degree which some Christian divines have incautiously maintained that it did. The truth of the matter seems to have been, that though several of them speak of their Jupiter in terms properly applicable to

SECT. IV. Ephes. II. 12.

versed in the world, ignorant of the one living and true God, its great Original and Support; and worshipping only such as by nature are no gods (Gal. iv. 8), ye had no conception of any being that was truly worthy to be spoken of by any Divine title.

13 *But* let your hearts reflect with joy and thankfulness on that blessed change which the Divine goodness hath *now* made in your condition, by bringing you to faith *in Christ Jesus;* for having cordially embraced him as exhibited in the gospel, *ye who were formerly afar off* from God, and from all the hopes and privileges of his people, *are* now *brought near* to God and to each other, *by the* atoning *blood of Christ*[c], whereby he hath expiated your guilt, and made a free and honourable way for your approach to God, and partaking

14 in all the benefits of his church. *For he is* the procurer of *our peace*[f], *who* hath reconciled us, whether Jews or Gentiles, to God and to each other, and hath so incorporated us into one church, that it may properly be said, he *hath made both one*, as to an interest in the favour of God and in the privileges of his people; *and* that no difference might remain between us, he *hath thrown down the middle wall of separation*, which divided us from each other, as the wall which runs between the court of the Gentiles and that of Israel in the temple at Jerusalem divided the Gentile wor-

13 But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

the one Self existent and Eternal Deity only, yet they taught and believed other things of him quite inconsistent with such perfections: and those who had some knowledge of one Supreme Eternal Cause, yet practically disregarded him; and, however they might reconcile it with the dictates of their consciences, worshipped inferior deities, and many of them such as were represented under the most scandalous characters, to the neglect of the Supreme Being, and the destruction of all true religion. Compare Rom. i. 20—26; and consult the notes on those verses, Vol. IV. p. 17; 18.

[c] *Are brought near by the blood of Christ.*] There seems to be an evident allusion here to the privilege of those Israelites who were not under any ceremonial pollution, or who were cleansed from their guilt by the blood of atonement, and so had free liberty of entering the temple and conversing with God; upon which account they are called *a people near unto him.* Psal. cxlviii. 14. Compare Exod. xix. 4, 6; Lev. x. 3; and Psal. lxv. 4.

[f] *He is our peace.*] This Mr. Locke would have to be the same with *your peace*, and to be meant of the Gentile converts, of whom the apostle had been speaking just before; but it is evident the reconciliation as well as the enmity, was mutual, and the Jews were at least as strongly prejudiced against the Gentiles as the Gentiles against the Jews; the apostle therefore with consummate propriety, goes on to speak in terms which were intended to include all true believers, whether originally belonging to the one or the other.

SECT. IV.

Ephes. II. 15.

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments, *contained* in ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new man, *so* making peace;

shippers from the Jewish[g]. This happy union between us the Lord Jesus Christ hath accomplished, *having abolished* by those sufferings which he endured *in his flesh*, what was the grand occasion of *the enmity* and mutual alienation which had so long prevailed; [*even*] *the law of* positive *commandments* and ceremonies, [*contained*] *in* the Mosaic *ordinances*, to which the Jews were so much attached, and to the bondage of which the Gentiles were so irreconcileably averse: but this Christ hath now abrogated and taken out of the way, *that* so *he might form the two* opposite parties, by virtue of their union with each other *in himself*, *into one new man*, uniting them together as new creatures in one church, under a dispensation very different from the former, in which they both should equally partake of the same privileges; [*so*] *making* an entire *peace* between them and laying a foundation not only for peace, but for mutual love, by removing the ground of those prejudices they had entertained against each other, and joining them in bonds of such tenderness as became the members of one living body; *And* 16 *that he might* complete this blessed work of making peace, and *reconcile* them *both*, as thus united *in one body*, and animated by one spirit, not merely unto one another, but *unto God*, he hath taken away the guilt of sin, and made atonement for it *by the* blood of his *cross*, removing by this means what was the cause of enmity between God and them, as they were all transgressors of his holy law; so that he may be properly considered, on account of what he suffered on the cross, as *having slain the enmity by it*, as he hath thus made up the breach which sin had made between God and his offending creatures, by means of the atoning sacrifice of himself. (Compare Col. i. 20.) *And*, having 17 procured this reconciliation by his death, *he came* to both, after his resurrection and ascen-

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby;

17 And came and

[g] Divided the Gentile worshippers from the Jewish.] This is that *wall* which was called the *chell*, which separated the court of the Gentiles from that into which the Jews only were allowed to enter; of which we have the most authentic account in Josephus (Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. 5. [al. vi. 6,] sect. 2.) Compare note [1], on Acts xxi. 28, Vol. III. p. 318.

SECT. IV.

sion, in the person of his authorised ambassadors, to whom he hath committed the important trust of speaking in his name and stead, (2 Cor. v. 19. 20), *and preached* the glad tidings of *peace* and reconciliation *to you that* [*were*] as Gentiles *afar off* from God, *and to them* also of the Jewish nation *that* [*were*] of old regarded as a people *near* unto him [h]; declaring the foundation he has laid, not only for a sincere reciprocal affection, but for all other most important benefits and blessings. *For*, as the happy fruit and consequence of the peace procured *by him* as well for the believing Gentiles as the Jews, *we both* are introduced into the Divine presence, and *have* an equal title to the liberty of a free *access to* God, as *the* common *Father* of the whole family[i], and may draw near to him with acceptance *in* the aids of *one Spirit*, under whose gracious influences we are fitted for the sacred pleasure of conversing with God, and filled with all filial confidence towards him, and brotherly affection to each other. (Rom. viii. 15.)

Ephes. II. 17.

preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18

18 For through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19 *Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners*[k], like those who came from distant nations to make a short abode among the Jews without a share in any of their privileges, *but fellow-citizens with the saints*, intitled to all their glorious immunities, *and* even the *domestics of God*, admitted to dwell in his house, and to par-

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

[h] *To you that were afar off, and to them that were near.*] It is so natural to refer this to what had been said of the different states of Jews and Gentiles, that one would wonder any should have thought of explaining both these characters of the Jews, as signifying those who lived in distant countries, as well as those who dwelt in or near Jerusalem where our Lord suffered.

[i] *Access to God the Father.*] The word προσαγωγην, which we render *access*, does properly refer to the custom of *introducing persons into the presence of some prince*, or of any other greatly their *superior*; in which case it is necessary they should be ushered in by one appointed for that purpose, to preserve a becoming decorum.

[k] *Strangers and foreigners.*] I know not how far there is room to distinguish nicely between the signification of these two words, ξενοι and παροικοι. If there be, the latter signifies something *more* than the former; and I doubt not but it alludes to the case of *sojourning strangers* among the Jews, who were not incorporated by complete proselytism into the body of the Jewish people, and made, as such proselytes were, συμπολιται, *fellow-citizens* with equal privileges. And perhaps when οικειοι του Θεου, *domestics of God*, is added, it may have some relation to that peculiar *nearness to God* in which the Jewish priests were, and refer to that great intimacy of unrestrained converse with God to which we as Christians are admitted; in which respect our privileges seem to resemble not only those of the people praying in the common court of Israel, but of the priests worshipping in the house itself. Nay it is elsewhere added, by a figure which seems beautifully to rise even on this, that we *have confidence to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus*. Heb. x. 19.

SECT. IV. Ephes. II. 20.

take of the honours and blessings of his family; *Being built on the foundation*[l] *of the apostles and prophets*,[m] who in their respective places, by their miraculous works and predictions, as well as by their several ministrations, have testified the kind regard of God to his people, and made provision for the establishment of the church; *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*, who holds the several parts together, and supports the whole stress of the edifice: *In whom the whole building, harmoniously* 21 *cemented*, in such a manner as to add beauty, strength, and unity, to the whole, *groweth* by the continual accession of new converts, and the advancing graces of those already converted, *into an holy temple in the Lord*, fitly consecrated to him, as being raised and supported by him. *In whom you also*, my dear brethren, be- 22 lieving in him as the great Lord of the church, *are built up together* with all true believers *for an habitation of God*, who *by the Spirit* of his grace takes up his residence among you, and publicly owns his relation to you in consequence of your union with his beloved Son.

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-*stone*;

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the apostle's remonstrance to these Ephesians remind us of our obligations to the Divine goodness, that we are not left in the sad state of our heathen ancestors; that we are not without the knowledge of Christ, in all the darkness of the Gentile

[l] *Being built on the foundation.*] It is observed by Lord Shaftesbury, that the apostle accommodates himself to the taste of the Ephesians, who were extremely fond of *architecture*, by frequent allusions to *building*, and to the majesty, order, and beauty, of which their *temple* consecrated to Diana was so celebrated a master-piece. (Compare chap. iii. 17, 18; and iv. 16, 29.) But it is certain, many allusions of this kind are to be met with in other epistles, particularly 1 Cor. iii. 9—17; vi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1; vi. 16. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 4—8.

[m] *Of the apostles and prophets.*] I have often wondered that such sensible writers as the late Lord Barrington and Mr. Jeffery should conclude that the prophets here spoken of are those of the New Testament. Compare Eph. iii. 5; iv. 11; with Mat. xvi. 18. See Miscell. Sacra, Essay ii. p. 44; and Jeffery's Review, p. 88. Their chief argument is, that the Gentile church there spoken of *was not built upon the foundation* of the *Old Testament prophets*. But not to insist upon it, that when the converted Gentiles came to consult the Jewish writings, they might derive from them great encouragement in their faith, it is to be considered that the apostle is now speaking, not of the Ephesian or Gentile church in particular, but of the whole Christian church consisting of the aggregate body of converted Gentiles and Jews, as appears farther from what is said in the close of this verse, of Christ's being the chief Corner-stone.

SECT. IV. Ver. 12. world; that we are not *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*; that we are not *destitute of* any well-grounded foundation of future *hope, and without God in the world.* But how unhappy is the case of many, who, though they are called Christians; yet have no saving interest in that Redeemer whose name they bear, in consequence of their being strangers to the obedience of faith, and a vital subjection of heart to his gospel! Let all that name the name of Christ, all that profess to know him, acknowledge, with a view
13 to his atoning sacrifice, that if they are brought near to God, it is by his blood. To this we owe the external privilege of a people nigh unto God; and to the effectual application of it we owe the blessings of that nearness which the heart feels as the earnest of its eternal happiness.

14, 16 If Christ, according to the principles of the apostle's reasoning, *hath made peace by the blood of his cross* between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, whose manner of living was so widely different from each other; if he *hath broken down the middle wall of partition* between them, and *of two made one new man*; how much more apparently reasonable is it that smaller differences should give way
18 to the engagements of so endearing a band! *Have we not all one Father?* And have we not all *access* to him *through one Saviour,*
19 *by one Spirit?* Let us then consider ourselves as fellow-citizens with the saints; and maintain that most cordial affection to all of this household, which becomes those that are of one family, and are named from one Lord.

20 And as a great security of this union, let us be concerned to maintain a due regard to the apostles and prophets on whom we are built, whose writings, if perused with diligence and attention, subserve so much to the purposes of Christian edification. But, above all, let us fix our regards upon Christ, as the chief Corner-stone; by a union with whom we are united to each other, and the whole stress of our eternal hopes is supported. In him the
21 whole building is fitly framed together; and it is by his operative influence that it groweth up to a holy temple in the Lord. Let
22 us consider ourselves as designed for this use, to be an habitation of God through the Spirit; and be concerned to cultivate that purity and sanctity which suits so excellent a relation, and so high a dignity. Let us lift up the everlasting gates of our souls to admit that blessed Inhabitant, that he may come and dwell in us, and consecrate us more and more unto himself.

SECT. V.

Farther to recommend the gospel to the regard of these Gentile converts, the apostle strongly expresses the sense he had of the Divine goodness in committing it to his trust, though he was called to sacrifice his liberty in its defence. Eph. III. 1—12.

EPHESIANS III. 1.

EPHES. III 1.

FOR this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;

FOR this cause, and for my faithful testimony to this glorious gospel, the plan of which is so extensive, so wise, and so benevolent, how little soever it may suit the narrow minds of my bigotted countrymen, *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner of Jesus Christ*;[a] being brought under this calamity, the loss of my liberty, *for the sake of you Gentiles,* and in consequence of that firm attachment which I am known to have to your cause and interest. For this I am persuaded you will consider as the occasion of my bonds, *since* I well know *you have heard,* and are acquainted with, *the dispensation of the* adorable *grace of God,*[b] *which* by his special favour to myself, and those to whom I am the herald of it, *hath been given to me in your behalf:* my zeal for which has been the means of stirring

SECT. V.

Ephes. III. 1.

2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward.

[a] *I Paul* [*am*] *the prisoner,* &c.] This is often alledged as an instance of an extraordinary length of sentence in the original, supposing that what begins the first verse of this chapter is resumed again at ver. 14, and not ended till the close of chap iv. 3. So that the sense runs, "*For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner* "*of Christ for you Gentiles,—for this cause* "[*I say,*] *I bow my knees,* &c.—[*even*] *I* "*the prisoner of the Lord beseech you there-* "*fore that ye walk worthy,* &c." Yet as the easy supposition that εγω is understood, would make the construction much more obvious and plain, I have therefore inserted the word [*am.*] But if I were sure the sentence in the original was of the utmost length that any have maintained, I should think the division of it in any translation very pardonable, especially in a paraphrase. I have often broke one period into many, as being much more concerned to give the true sense as intelligibly as possible, than to preserve the grammatical construction of every word in the version where this might occasion obscurity; and it will not be easy for any who have not been exercised in works of this kind, to imagine the difficulty which this precaution has often brought upon me. Compare note [b] on chap. i. 3, sect. i.

[b] *Since* I well know *you have heard,* &c.] So I translate the words ειγε ηκουσατε, for I think it cannot be imagined, that they had *never heard,* during his long abode at Ephesus, from him and from many others, an account of the extraordinary revelation of the gospel which he had received. As for the inference that some would draw from hence, that this epistle (if it was not written to some other church where he had never preached) was written before Paul came to live at Ephesus, I think it absolutely inconclusive; not only considering that the particle ειγε has often the signification of [*inasmuch as*] or [*since*] or [*seeing that*;] but because it is certain he was now a prisoner at Rome, which he never was till long after that abode at Ephesus. (Acts xix. 10, 11.) I may add, that the words ακουσατε την οικονομιαν are not so properly rendered, *Ye have heard* [*of*] *the dispensation,* &c. which determines the sense to what they might have learned by report from others; they may as well express their having heard this dispensation from his own mouth.

SECT. V.

Ephes. iii. 3.

up the malice of the Jews against me: And I am confident you cannot forget what you have often heard, *that* to prepare and furnish me for this important work to which the Lord hath called me, *he made known to me by* immediate *revelation*, and not by the instrumentality of any human testimony, *the* great *mystery* which had so long been concealed; *as I have briefly wrote before*, and hinted more than once in this epistle, (chap. i. 9, 10; ii. 11, & seq.) in passages which, though they contain not a full illustration of the matter, yet suggest some material hints with regard to it; *By which when you read*[c] what I have laid before you, and attentively consider and review [*it*,] *you may observe* and form some notion of *my understanding in the mystery of Christ*,[d] which so many still remain ignorant of, and so many others are unwilling to acknowledge and admit.

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words.

4 Whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,)

This I with great propriety call a mystery, it being a most astonishing and glorious system of Divine truth, *which in other* preceding *generations was not made known to the sons of men*:[e] having neither been discovered to the Gentiles, who were wholly strangers to it, nor manifested under any former dispensation to those whom God had taken for his people, with any such perspicuity, *as* that with which *it is now revealed*

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now

[c] *By which when you read.*] Dr. Whithy would render the phrase πρὸς ἃ ἀναγινώσκοντες, *by attending to which*: but as ἀναγινώσκω signifies to *read* and *review*, or (as we vulgarly speak,) to *con* a thing over in the mind, to root it there, which must suppose *frequent reading*, I chose to retain the common translation.

[d] *You may observe my understanding in the mystery of Christ.*] This Dr. Goodwin thinks to be the highest encomium made by the apostle on any of his own writings; whence he concludes, that this is the *richest* and *noblest* of all the epistles, and thinks it was peculiarly intended to be so, to reward the generous zeal of the Ephesians in burning their *curious books*, by a book of *Divine knowledge*, incomparably more valuable than any or all of them. (See Acts xix. 19.) I pretend not absolutely to decide on the comparative excellency of his epistles, but could not forbear mentioning so remarkable and ingenious a thought. See Goodwin's Works, Vol. I. p. 2.

[e] *Which in other generations was not made known*, &c.] The following verse so plainly determines this passage to *the calling of the Gentiles* into the church, that I think there can be no controversy as to the general sense of it; though it seemed to me, that the apostle's explaining it in the manner he presently does, rendered it improper to anticipate that explication in the paraphrase. It was indeed *known long before* that the Gentiles should be added to the church; but it was *not known* that they should be *heirs of the same inheritance*, and *partakers of the promise of the Spirit*. The Jews rather thought of their being *slaves to them*; and least of all did they imagine, that *the middle wall* of their *ceremonies* should be *broken down*, and the Gentiles admitted to the *full privileges* of God's people, without *circumcision* and obedience to the *Mosaic law*; which the Christian converts among them heard of at first with great amazement. Acts x. 45; xi. 18.

Ephes. III. 6.

revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

6 That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel:

by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets of the New-Testament dispensation, who have the word of wisdom and of knowledge given to them. (1 Cor. xii. 8.) And what I chiefly have in view, as one very material part of it, is this, *that the Gentiles should be joint-heirs* with the Jews in spiritual privileges, *and* should be members *of the same body* with them, *and partakers together of his promise in Christ;* particularly of the communication of the Holy Spirit, in token of their sharing in all the other blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, which the Jews have fondly imagined to be peculiar to themselves, but which are now freely proposed to the Gentile nations *by the gospel* which we are commissioned every where to preach.

7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power

This is the gospel *of which I was made a minister*, not of my own motion or seeking, not at all on account of any worthiness in me, but *according to the* free *gift of the grace of God, which* in so extraordinary and remarkable a manner *was given to me*, calling me forth to the apostleship *by the energy of his power*, which wrought so great a change in me as to prepare and qualify me for that high and holy office; to the purposes of which no man living can be more averse than I once was. And when I think of this I am covered with confusion, and know not how to speak of myself in any terms of sufficient abasement: for such was the astonishing condescension of the great God, and such his favour to a worthless creature, that *unto me, who am* so unworthy of the honour of being called an apostle, that I am *less than the least of all saints*[1], and look upon myself, on account of what I formerly was, as below the very meanest among them, *this grace was given*, that I should be employed *to preach among the Gentiles the*

8 Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the un-

[1] *Less than the least of all saints.*] It has often been observed here, that the apostle makes a new word (which as grammarians would speak, is the comparative degree of the superlative), ἐλαχιστότερος, which I think no translation can fully equal, or very happily express. No doubt, he refers to what he had been formerly, when he *persecuted the church of God*; (compare 1 Cor. xv. 9; and 1 Tim. i. 13.) But whether there be (as Dr. Goodwin thinks, Vol. I. p. 3), any reference to his name Paulus, which in the Roman language signified *little*, and at the same time to the *lowness* of his *stature*, which occasioned Chrysostom's calling him τριπηχυν ανθρωπον, *a man three cubits high*, I do not pretend to say; and only hint at what Sigonius says, that Æmilius Paulus obtained his additional name from his *low stature*.

SECT. V.

Ephes. III. 8.

unsearchable riches of Christ; which while I am endeavouring to trace out in their particular contents, I am quite lost in rapturous amazement, and all my most elevated conceptions are swallowed up in that unfathomable fulness which

searchable riches of Christ;

9 can never be exhausted. Yet to this honourable and important office am I graciously appointed, to enlighten and instruct as well the Gentiles as the Jews (Acts xxvi. 18), *and to make all men see*, in some affecting measure and degree, *what* [*is*] the happiness arising from *the communication of the mystery* of the calling of the Gentiles to be joint-heirs with the Jews, *which from eternal ages was hid*, being concealed *in* the secret counsels of the ever-blessed and incomprehensible *God*[g], *who*, as he at first *created all things by Jesus Christ*, his Divine Son, (John i. 3.) hath new-created also all that are in him by a lively faith, and by him raised them to the prospect of complete holiness and happiness[h].

9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 And this is now revealed and set in a new light, after the more imperfect intimations of it that were given before, *that the manifold wisdom of God*, discovering itself in such a beautiful and well-ordered variety of dispensations, *might now* more fully *be made known*, and be displayed in all its brightness *to the principalities and powers in heavenly* [*places*], even to all the various orders of angelic beings, *by means of* what is done for *the church*[i], which is the happy object of a

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places*, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

[g] *What is the communication of the mystery*, &c.] Some would translate the following clause (το αποκεκρυμμενον απο των αιωνων), *which has been hid from the ages*, that is, from the *former* ages of the world: but as in ver. 11. it is called προθεσιν των αιωνων, *an eternal purpose*, and is here said to be *hid in God*, I apprehend no need of varying the translation, where the phrase is the same, though to be sure this interpretation includes the sense of the other. It is evident, that here is an allusion to the burying a treasure in some secret place (compare Josh. vii. 21: and Mat. xiii. 44; where the same word is used); as there may also be in the word ανεξιχνιαστα, ver. 8, which properly signifies *what cannot be traced out*: and it is certain, that though something is now *known* concerning this *glorious mystery*, yet there is an incomparably greater part concerning which we only know in the general that it is *a rich treasure*, without particularly knowing either *what*, *how much*, or *where* it is.

[h] *Created all things by Jesus Christ.*] Mr. Locke pleads, as Diodate had done before, that this refers, not to the *creation* of the world, but to the *renovation of it*; and so may be considered as an intimation that God always intended Christ should have the honour of *forming all things anew*, and therefore concealed *the mystery* in himself till after he was come. But the words, if taken in the most extensive sense, contain both a certain and a pertinent truth.

[i] *To be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly* [*places*], &c.] The prophecies of the Old Testament gave

love that hath produced effects beyond what the spirits of heaven could otherwise have conceived or apprehended; and in the contemplation of it they are furnished with new motives to adore that grace, which by the manifestations of it to the church displays new glories, unparalleled in all the history of heaven, in the surprising methods taken to complete the number of its blessed inhabitants: All which gracious operations proceed in perfect harmony with the original plan adjusted in the Divine Mind; *according to the eternal purpose which he formed* before all ages *in Christ Jesus our Lord*,[k] both to be executed by him, and to terminate in him; which as his well-beloved Son he was appointed to effect, and all the benefits of which he has secured to be communicated to the church; Even that blessed Mediator, *through whom we have freedom of speech* in our approaches to the throne of grace, *and* have *access with confidence* of being heard, as being assured of audience and acceptance *by the faith of him*; in a reliance upon whom we may address ourselves to God with the humble cheerful liberty of children whom he hath adopted into his family, and united to himself in the dearest and most indissoluble bonds.

SECT. V. Ephes. III. 10.

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposeth in Christ Jesus our Lord.

11

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

12

IMPROVEMENT.

ST. Paul's understanding in the mystery of Christ is just matter of perpetual joy to the whole Christian world, and especially to the Gentile churches, which have derived from thence so much of their knowledge and of their hope. Let us congratulate ourselves and each other on the propagation of so glorious a system

Verse 4

strong intimations, at least, of the intended *calling of the Gentiles* into the church; and the angels seem expressly to refer to it in what they said to the shepherds, and in their anthem at the nativity of Christ, (Luke ii. 10, 14.) I apprehend therefore, that the apostle here would lead the thoughts of his readers to the series of Divine dispensations as gradually opening this great discovery, and not merely to what he preached concerning it; though to be sure that greatly illustrated the scheme.—It is strangely unnatural to explain this clause as Mr. Locke would do, of *the Jewish principalities and powers*; by which he is driven to the hard shift of connecting ἐν τῷ κτίσαντι with *the wisdom of God*, which the first reading of the words in the original will shew how little they will bear.

[k] *According to the eternal purpose, &c.*] Mr. Locke would render κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων, &c. *according to that predisposition of the ages*, or several dispensations, *which he made in Christ Jesus*, which by the pre ordination of God's purpose were all regulated and constituted in him; and Dr. Whitby taking it in the same sense, explains it of his being promised in the first age to Adam, typified in the second to the Jews, and in the last age preached to *all the world*. But perhaps this interpretation may coincide more with a sense they are so solicitous to avoid, than either of these learned authors was aware.

SECT. V. of Divine truth, which had so long been concealed from ages and generations. The apostles and prophets were raised up by God to receive and reveal it: and we are entered on the blessed fruit of their labours; (John iv. 38.) Let us learn from them to set a due value on our participation in that inheritance, on our union to that body to which by the gospel we are called.

Verse 5 6

8 May it particularly teach us that humility which was so conspicuous, so amiable, so admirable in St. Paul. This excellent man, this distinguished favourite of heaven, who stood in the foremost rank of Christians, of ministers, of apostles, yet labours for words to express the sense he had of his own meanness and unworthiness, and commits a kind of solecism in language, that he might lay himself as low as possible; using the most diminutive term that could be, to describe himself as one who in his own esteem was *less than the least of all saints!* And shall we then exalt ourselves, and be proud of the trifling distinctions that raise our obscure heads a little above some of our brethren?

Let those in particular, who have the honour of being called to the sacred office of the ministry, consider how reasonable it is, that instead of being puffed up with it they should rather be humbled, when they reflect how unworthy the best of men are of it, and in how defective a manner the most faithful discharge it; while yet the grace is given them to preach the riches of Christ, his unsearchable riches. Let these be made the frequent subject of their preaching; and let all the course of it be directed, in a proper manner, to the illustration of that subject. Let the well-chosen phrase which the apostle uses here, teach them and all Christians, to search more and more into this unfathomable abyss; as still sure to discover new wonders in the variety and fulness of its inexhaustible contents beyond what they have known before, and to find new pleasures in tracing again those already known.

10 This glorious theme is worthy of the contemplation of *angels;* and we are elsewhere told, that these celestial spirits *desire to look into it* (1 Pet. i. 12,) and to learn new displays of the Divine attributes *from the church.* Let us then hear and worship, as under their inspection; and let not our hearts be cold to these sacred truths which are our own salvation, while they rejoice in them only on the general principles of piety and benevolence.

11 All that is done in the prosecution of the glorious design of our redemption now, is the result of those counsels of peace which God from eternal ages formed in his own compassionate mind. To that source, after the example of the apostle, let us frequently trace all with the most exalted gratitude; recollecting 12 that we receive this adoption in Christ, who is the great Mediator of our access unto God. Let us therefore on the one hand, take all our encouragements in prayer from views to him; and on the other, having such a foundation for it, let us come with

an holy boldness to the Divine throne, that so we may obtain the mercy and grace which we daily and hourly need. SECT. V.

SECT. VI.

The apostle represents the earnestness with which he prayed for their establishment in Christianity, as the best wish the most fervent affection could dictate for them. Eph. III. 13, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS III. 13.

EPHES III. 13. WHEREFORE I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

SUCH and so great are the privileges to which the gospel raises us; *wherefore*, as I have been the happy instrument of bringing it among you, though (as I said before, ver. 1), I am now a prisoner for you Gentiles, yet *I desire*, my dear brethren, *that ye faint not*, or be in any degree discouraged *at my affliction for you, which* when it is thoroughly considered upon what account I endure these sufferings, must be acknowledged to be so far from any reason to dishearten you, that it may rather serve for the encouragement and confirmation of your faith, and *is* indeed *your glory*: for it is really an honour that God does you, in employing his faithful servant to lay out his time and strength, and even to sacrifice his liberty in your cause; and that courage and cheerfulness in which God is pleased to support me in the midst of all these hardships, shews his farther regard for you, and may justly be esteemed as intended by him, not for my comfort only, but for an additional honour to you. SECT. VI. Ephes. III. 13.

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

For this cause, that the great work in which I am engaged may more successfully be carried on, and that the purposes of these my sufferings may be answered in your consolation and the Divine glory, while I am here in the retirements of my prison, I am daily pouring out my soul to God on your account, and, with the most affectionate concern for your establishment, *I bend my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; 14

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Even of that great and glorious Redeemer, *of whom the whole family* both *in heaven and on earth is named**, by whom angels 15

* *Of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.*] As Christ is the person last mentioned, immediately before the words ἐξ οὗ [*of whom*] it seems most

SECT. VI

Ephes. III. 15.

and men are incorporated into one society, and as well those who are gone before to the possession of the heavenly inheritance, as those who are here on earth, receive a more excellent name than that of children of Abraham, and are united in one happy family, of which he is the

16 Head. And the great petition I am addressing to his Father and ours, is this; *that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory,* out of those redundant stores of goodness in his gracious heart which can never be exhausted, *to be mightily strengthened by* the effectual operation of *his Spirit,* invigorating and increasing every grace, and carrying on his work with abundant success, *in the inner man,* that is, in all the various powers of your souls; so as thereby to fortify you under every trial, and animate you more and more to every good work:

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 And as it is from Christ as our common Head, that all these blessings of the Holy Spirit are imparted, I am daily importunate with God, *that Christ may dwell in your hearts,* that he may take up his stated residence in your souls, *by* the continual exercise of a lively *faith,* by means of which a constant intercourse with him will be maintained, and an assurance given you of your interest in him; *being* also *rooted and grounded in love,* stedfastly fixed and settled, not only in the knowledge of his love to you, but in the exercise of a fervent love to him and to each other, which will so greatly tend both to nourish and establish the

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love,

18 soul. *That,* under the influence of these united principles of faith and love, *ye may be enabled with all saints* in every place, to whom

18 May be able to comprehend with all

reasonable to interpret this clause as referring to *him;* though others rather choose to understand it *of the Father,* who is indeed the principal subject of the foregoing sentence, nor would I insist upon the sense here given. Both Mr. Locke and Diodate explain it of *God the Father,* the Lord of the whole family, including all believers who are jointly with Christ, who is already in heaven, *the sons of God;* in confirmation of which sense Mr. L'Enfant observes, that we are said to be ἐν τῷ Θεῷ, and διὰ τὸ Χριστοῦ; and it is certain Christians are said to belong to *the family of God* (chap. ii. 19):— Mr. Boyse also goes into the same interpretation (in his Four last Things, p. 588,) and argues from hence, that *departed saints* are *in heaven* before the resurrection, or otherwise according to this distribution, as they are not *on earth,* they would not belong to *God's family.* But heaven may here be taken in a great latitude for all the regions of happiness in the invisible world, though the place in which separate spirits dwell should be different from that which they are to inhabit with Christ after the resurrection. The Jewish writers call *heaven* the upper, and *earth* the lower family of God.

saints, what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

whether known or unknown, I wish this as the most invaluable blessing, *to apprehend* with greater clearness, *what* [*is*] *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*[b] of the great mystery of redeeming love, and to survey with a becoming astonishment, and with some suitable conceptions, the vast dimensions of that glorious plan; that in some measure you may see how wide it extends, even to all nations and ages; how far it reaches, even from everlasting to everlasting; from what an abyss of misery it delivers us, and to what a summit of felicity and glory it exalts us. SECT. VI. Ephes. III. 18

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

This is my earnest and importunate prayer for you, and for all the rest of my Christian brethren; that ye may thus be enabled with greater admiration to contemplate, *and* more abundantly *to know, the love of Christ, which*, after all we can say or think of it, *surpasses* by infinite degrees the most advanced *knowledge*,[c] even of the angels themselves, and how much more of mortal men in this imperfect state: but I wish you more enlarged apprehensions of it, *that* so *ye may be filled with all the fulness of God*,[d] that your expanded hearts, being dilated more and more, may be rendered capable of admitting 19

[b] *The breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*] It has often and very justly been observed, that this *text* is *wonderfully emphatical*. Bodies are well known to have only *three* dimensions, *length*, and *breadth*, and *thickness*; but the apostle Paul divides this last into its *depth* downwards, and its *height* upwards, measuring from the middle point; and so makes use of it to express the *depth of misery* from which the love of Christ delivers us, as well as the *height of glory* to which it exalts us. See Blackwall's Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 350.

[c] *To know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.*] I can conceive no imaginable reason, with Mr. Locke, to confine the interpretation of this text merely to *the Love of Christ in calling the Gentiles*. Well may we recollect on this occasion all that love which Christ has displayed in redeeming his church out of every nation and kingdom under heaven, Gentiles as well as Jews, from final misery, and exalting it to eternal glory. And this is so remarkable and admirable, that the most extensive explication of this text must certainly be the most proper.—Nor can the phrase of *its surpassing knowledge* merely signify its exceeding the Jewish dispensation, (which is seldom, if ever, called *knowledge*,) but its exceeding *our most elevated conceptions*. The *catachresis* here used, greatly enhances the beauty of the expression on this explication, whereas otherwise it must appear very dry and jejune.

[d] *That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*] It is rightly observed by the learned and pious Professor Franckius (Manud. ad Sac. Script. legend. p. 191.) that there is in these two verses an allusion to the *temple*; expressing his wish that the *foundation* might be so extensively and *deeply* laid, that a *superstructure* may be raised extending itself to such a magnificent *length* and *breadth*, and *height*, as to be fitted to receive and lodge the *sacred Guest*, that he might *dwell* as it were *unrivalled* in their hearts. And in this view it will indeed appear a noble train of thought.

SECT. VI.

larger degrees than ever of Divine love, and more ample in-dwellings of Divine consolation; till at length ye arrive at that happy state in which ye shall attain to a full perfection in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, where that which is perfect shall come, and ye shall know even as also ye are known.

Ephes. III. 19.

20 With these prayers am I softening the sorrows of my own imprisonment, and endeavouring to do what I can towards supplying to you and other Christians, the deficiency of those public services which my present confinement forbids: and I doubt not but these humble petitions will come up in remembrance before God. Methinks I see them even *now* descending in blessings on my head and on yours, from the adorable Source of all good; and therefore I cannot forbear adding, *To him that is able to do* all things for us, not only to the utmost extent of our petitions, but *abundantly exceeding all that we [can] ask or conceive, according to the power which is* already so illustriously displayed, and 21 *worketh* so efficaciously *in us; To him [be] glory in the* whole *church* both of Jews and Gentiles, the happy society which he hath so wonderfully redeemed, and so bountifully enriched *by Christ Jesus* its glorious Head, through whom all his blessings descend to us, and our praises ascend to him: and may they ascend *throughout all* the most distant ages and periods while earth with its successive *generations* continues; and may they resound from all his redeemed in the mansions of glory, far beyond the limits of time, even *for ever and ever*,[e] *Amen.* Let your hearts with mine consent to it; and in that consent anticipate something of that pleasure, with which we hope for ever to render these praises.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

[e] *Throughout all generations for ever and ever.*] This is one of St. Paul's self-invented and most expressive phrases, εις πασας τας γενεας του αιωνος των αιωνων, which a learned critic justly defies any version whatsoever fully to express. (See Blackwall's Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 83.)—*Through all the successions of an endless eternity* may come something near it; but even this, emphatical as it may seem, falls vastly short of the sublimity and spirit of the original.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VI.

LET our eyes be frequently directed to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our knees be frequently bowed before him, invoking him under this amiable and delightful character as the great Father of that one family which he hath been pleased in infinite mercy to form to himself; a family consisting not only of those who were originally the inhabitants of heaven, who were born in his house, and have never offended him, but of many who have been, and many who are the inhabitants of earth, once the children of the curse, and the heirs of death and destruction. Ver. 14. 15

Let us all remember it is now the family of Christ, our great elder Brother, who, though the Lord of heaven, disdains not to own that humble relation while the angels are adoring him as standing at the head of the society, and esteem it their honour to be related to him. Let us be more affected with the grace extended to us, and consider our relation to him as a bond of union among ourselves. While we are of this family, let not the different garbs we wear, or the different apartments in which we are lodged, alienate our affections from each other; but let us often be thinking of that blessed day when the whole family shall meet above, and let us in the mean time endeavour to behave as worthy members of it, and have its common interests at heart. 15

And from that eminently faithful and honourable branch of the family, the blessed apostle, whose words we have been reading, let us learn *what to wish* for ourselves and our brethren: even that God, *according to the riches of his grace*, would *strengthen us with might by his spirit in the inner man*; that we may attain great degrees of vigour and confirmation in religion, by the vital and powerful operations of the Holy Spirit of God upon our hearts; that we may be strong to discharge every duty, to resist temptations, to conquer our enemies, to assist our brethren, and to glorify our Father and our Saviour. 16

Let us earnestly desire, that Christ may not only now and then visit our hearts, but by the habitual and lively exercises of faith may even dwell in them; that we may be thus continually conversant with him as our most honoured and beloved Guest; and that love may take deep root in our hearts, and be solidly grounded there. Let us earnestly pray that, under Divine illuminations, we may be enabled to form more exalted and suitable conceptions than we have ever yet attained, of the *breadth, and length, and depth, and height*, of this *unfathomable*, this inconceivable *love of Christ, which surpasses* the perfect *knowledge* even of saints in glory. And O that by these contemplations 17 18 19

SECT. VI.

we may find ourselves daily *filled with all the fulness of God*, so that our hearts may even overflow with the abundant communication of his gifts and graces!

What shall we say in return for the knowledge he hath already given us, for the love which he hath already wrought in our hearts, if we are so happy as to know the grace of God in truth? What! but that believing his power to out-do all it
Ver. 20. hath already wrought for us, yea to *do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think*, we will still confide in him and call upon him; and will humbly endeavour to bear our part
21 with the whole church, in ascribing to our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, and our Father, *glory throughout all ages*, and even *world without end. Amen.*

SECT. VII.

From the consideration of his own sufferings, as well as of the many important respects in which all true Christians are united, the apostle pathetically exhorts them to mutual love, and to steadiness in religion, by representing to them the glorious foundation which Christ as the great Head of the church hath laid for it. Eph. IV. 1—16.

EPHESIANS. IV. 1.

SECT. VII.

I HAVE mentioned my bonds but a little while ago, and I shall mention them now again; for nothing can tend so much to soften them as to find them the occasion of honour to Christ, and good to his church; and nothing surely can more powerfully move you to regard the exhortations I would offer to you: *I therefore* call upon you to consider me while you read this, as in confinement, not for any crime that hath deserved such treatment, but as *the prisoner of the Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] in bonds for my fidelity

Ephes. IV. 1.

EPHES. IV. 1.

I THEREFORE the prisoner of the

[a] *The prisoner of the Lord.*] Some have observed of this epistle, and of those others which were written by the apostle Paul in his *imprisonment*, (namely, those to the Colossians and the Philippians, as well as that to Philemon, and the *second* to Timothy,) that they are more especially remarkable for their excellence, and discover a peculiar *savour* of the *things of God*; by which it may be seen, that while *his sufferings* did abound, *his consolations* also did abound much more. It is however manifest, that this epistle, as it sets forth, in the preceding part of it, the gracious design of God in the gospel dispensation, and represents the benefits and privileges that belong to *all the faithful in Christ Jesus*, as well to Gentiles as to Jews, is cast into a strain of thanksgivings and prayers, and written, (as it were) all in a rapture, in a sublime and elevated style, as flowing from a mind transported with the consideration of the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of God in the work of redemption, and of the amazing love displayed in Christ towards the Gentile world. And the *remaining part of it* is no less admirable for the engaging manner

Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith *ye* are called,

to that gospel he hath committed to my charge. And I *beseech you* by the memory of my chains *that ye* make it your great care and daily labour, to *walk worthy of the* high and holy *calling wherewith ye are called:* let there be nothing in your temper and conduct beneath the dignity to which you are raised, and the illustrious hopes which are set before you; but shew that the crown of glory is ever in your eye, and that your hearts are duly impressed with it: And particularly as you have received the pardon of your sins, and are adopted into the family of God, let the remembrance of it engage you to behave *with all humility* and lowliness of heart, under a sense of your former guilt and misery, and your unworthiness of that mercy which God hath magnified towards you; *and* thus to carry it with *meekness* towards those who may have troubled you by their frowardness, tenderly passing over their infirmities and indiscretions, as sensible what great offences have been forgiven to yourselves. And should you meet with injuries from any of your brethren, as it is to be feared that even among professing Christians this will sometimes happen, do not think much to bear with them; but let me entreat you, that ye endure them *with long suffering* and patience without seeking revenge, and *forbear one another* in such circumstances, *in* the unfeigned exercise of mutual *love*: [b] And not on this occasion only, but with respect to your whole carriage to each other, how different soever your sentiments and practices may be in matters of an indifferent nature, be still *endeavouring*, so far as in you lies, *to keep the unity of the Spirit*, that unity of heart and affection which becomes those who are regenerated by one Spirit acting on them all, and forming them into one body; joining

SECT. VII.

Ephes. IV. 1.

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the

in which he improves what he had before delivered, urging the duties which became their character, with the greatest tenderness, in expressions full of love and endearment, adding the strongest arguments to enforce them, and making mention of his bonds to recommend the exhortations that he offered to them.

[b] *With long suffering, forbear one another in love.*] As there is no *copulative* between *meekness* and *long suffering*, it seems most natural to connect the latter with the following clause: and if the exhortation be thus rendered, it will prevent the *solecism* which would arise from connecting ανεχομενοι with ζηλος in the verse before, to which we should be led by our translation. See Blackwall's Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 98.

SECT. VII. Ephes. IV. 3.

them thus together *in the bond of peace*,[c] and sweetly engaging them, not only to the most pacific, but to the most affectionate conduct to each other.

Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 For this is indeed the case with regard to all that have truly and cordially embraced the gospel, and nothing can be stronger than the motives to this union, when it is considered, that with respect to the whole church [*there is*] only *one body*, of which ye all are members, and should as such have the same care for one another, (1 Cor. xii. 25:) *and* in this body there is *one Spirit* that enlivens, actuates, and fills it, under whose influence it should be your concern to act in such a way as to resemble him who is the Spirit of love and peace; and there is one inheritance that ye are waiting for, *as ye are also called in one* blessed *hope of your calling*, and should live therefore as inspired with the same joyful expectation of being all brought to the same blessed end, to one glorious abode in

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 the heavenly world: There is also *one Lord* and Head of all, even Jesus Christ, who hath come down from heaven and died for our salvation; that he might incorporate us all into one society, that he might instruct us all in *one faith*, and might unite us all in *one baptism*,[d] in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 Ghost: And thus he introduces us all into the knowledge and favour of the *one God and Father of all* true believers, *who*, in the infinite perfections of his essence [*is*] *above all*, governing all without exception as the supreme Ruler of universal nature; who animates *and* operates *through all*, by the diffusive influence of his vital presence; *and* who is particularly *in you all*, by that special residence which he holds in those that are the temples of his grace.

6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

7 Such are the great engagements we are under, to the strictest and most affectionate union; and howsoever we may be distinguished from each

7 But unto every

[c] *To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*] See an excellent discourse on these words, in Mr. Baxter's Practical Works, Vol. IV. p. 628, & seq.

[d] *One baptism.*] It is mere *trifling* to object from hence against *water baptism*, since there can be no room to oppose that to the *baptism of the Spirit*; and it is very plain that the apostle, while he declared that there was but *one baptism*, practiced that of water.

SECT. VII.

Ephes. IV. 7.

one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

other, by the variety of our gifts, or by the difference of our stations, these several distinctions ought to be regarded by us, not as matter of emulation and contention, *but* rather as an additional obligation to love, when we consider the great source and design of all: for *grace is given* and dispensed in different degrees *to every one of us* in particular, not for the merit of one above another, but, *according to the measure of the* free *gift of Christ*,[e] in such a measure as seems best to him, the great Sovereign of the church, to bestow it; whose distributions we always know to be guided by consummate wisdom and goodness, so that we all have the highest reason entirely to acquiesce in them. For we receive whatever gifts we have from Christ, and they are all bestowed by him; *wherefore* the words of David may be considered as applicable to this,[f] where *he says*, (Psal. lxviii. 18.) "*When he ascended on high, he led captivity* "*captive*,[g] *and gave gifts unto men*;" for na-

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

[e] *Grace is given to every one of us*, &c.] That their differing in some respects, although united in so many, might not be urged as any plea for self-esteem, or neglect of others, who wanted such distinguishing advantages, the apostle properly insists upon it, that all is communicated to us by way of free gift and sovereign liberality.

[f] The words of David may be considered as applicable to this.] I cannot undertake to prove, that the passage here referred to is, strictly speaking, a *prediction* of *Christ's ascension*, and of his *shedding down* the gifts and graces of the *Spirit*. The Psalmist celebrating a late victory, goes back in rapturous meditation to God's victory over the Egyptians, and the spoils with which he enriched the Israelites, ungrateful and rebellious as they had been, and by which he prepared for himself in the course of his providence a dwelling among them; for the tabernacle was built principally with those spoils. And the apostle beautifully accommodates the words to the triumph of an ascending Saviour, and to the royal donative of the Spirit; which he shed down on his church, into which many who had been once most rebellious were admitted, and whereby it was fitted to be his habitation. We render the clause quoted, *Thou hast received gifts for men*; but the Hebrew word signifies, *Thou hast taken*, and may either express taking from the enemy, or taking out of his own royal treasures.

[g] *He led captivity captive.*] This is a phrase that signifies the leading on *a train of captives*, but may with greater emphasis be applied to those who of *conquerors* and *oppressors* are made *captives*; (compare Judg. v. 12.) And thus it may be properly understood of the *triumph of Christ* over *sin*, *Satan*, the *world*, and *death*, by whom such multitudes were conquered, and enslaved. Mr. Pierce indeed has taken great pains to prove that these words are to be interpreted of the *good angels*, as if the meaning were, "that Christ led "in triumph the *angels* who voluntarily "subjected themselves to him, after "having been before his *fellow-guardians* "in presiding over other countries, as he "was God's *Vicegerent* in Israel." And to establish this, he largely pleads, that neither the devils, nor the souls of departed saints, ascended with Christ into heaven, and consequently that these words must refer to the train of attendant angels. But Christ might poetically be said *to lead captivity captive*, when he triumphed over those that had subdued his people, and acquired such a power over the infernal spirits, as a conqueror has over a captive that he drags at his chariot

SECT. VII. Ephes. IV. 8.

turally may our devout meditations rise from that glorious pomp with which God went up from mount Sinai, when he had triumphed over the Egyptians, and poured down blessings on his people, to that illustrious ascension of our blessed Redeemer, when he had vanquished our enemies on the cross, and returned to his Father, poured down his royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror[h] upon his faithful subjects, yea gifts, in which those who had long been rebellious, and had but lately laid down their weapons,

9 were to share. *Now this* [*expression*] that *he ascended, what is it,* or what does it imply, *but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth*;[i] having come down from heaven and dwelt in this earth of ours, yea, and submitted even to lie in the caverns of it for a while under the power of death? For to this low humiliation our thoughts may naturally be conducted, the subject being so familiar to our mind, and the phrase so capable of suggesting

10 these ideas to us. And on the other hand, it leads us to reflect, that *he who descended* to such forms of humble abasement *is also the* very *same* glorious and triumphant Person *who ascended far above all heavens*, beyond the regions of the air, into the heaven of heavens; going up, as the Psalmist elsewhere speaks, with a shout and with the sound of a trumpet, (Psal. xlvii. 5.) received with the acclamations of all the hierarchy of heaven, and seated on a throne of glory, *that he might fill all things* with his influence, and direct and overrule all by his wisdom and power.

11 Accordingly he hath shed down a rich variety

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it, but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave

wheels. In this view it may also be observed, that the Egyptians, over whom God is represented as triumphing in the passage quoted from the lxviii Psalm, though they might seem to be taken prisoners in the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 25—28, were not, in strictness of speech, *led in triumphant procession*, but *immediately destroyed* by the Divine vengeance.

[h] *His royal donatives like a triumphant conqueror.*] Many have observed that here is an allusion to the custom of conquerors, who used to give largesses to their soldiers after a triumph; see Limborch Theolog. lib. iii. cap. 25, sect. ii. And though the Roman instances of this custom are perhaps the most familiar to our minds, yet all who are acquainted with antiquity, know that it was not peculiar to them. Compare Judg. v. 28—30.

[i] *Into the lower parts of the earth.*] Bishop Pearson, on the Creed, p. 229, has shown how very precariously this is urged as a proof of *Christ's descent into hell*; the phrase being such as other scriptures plainly lead us to refer, either to his *incarnation*, Psal. cxxxix. 15. or his descent into the *grave*. Compare Psal. lxiii. 9. and Mat. xii. 40.

some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

SECT. VII.

Ephes. IV. 11.

of gifts and graces from his triumphal seat at the right-hand of the Father to qualify and endow his servants for those various offices in the church which he hath wisely and graciously instituted for the advancement of his interest and kingdom: *and* thus, among the gifts which he bestowed to be employed for the advantage of his people in their respective situations, *he gave some* to be *apostles*, whose offices should be personal, but should extend in its effects to the remotest generations, sending them forth to preach the gospel unto every creature as his special witnesses, and forming them, under the plenary and most abundant influences of his Spirit, to the fullest knowledge of that scheme they were to publish to the world (compare Mark xvi. 15, and 1 Cor. xii. 28); *and some* he gave to be *prophets*, who were to explain the mysteries of faith, and to foretel future events, by virtue of the extraordinary revelations made to them; *and some* to be *evangelists*, who were to travel from place to place, and to fulfil such particular commissions as the apostles should give, in settling and establishing the churches they had planted (Acts xix. 22,) being furnished with such miraculous powers as were necessary for that purpose: *and*, besides these extraordinary offices, he also gave *some* to be settled *pastors and teachers* [k], who were to be of standing use, to preside in the several congregations of the saints, taking the stated oversight of them in the Lord, and to instruct them both in public and private, as their respective circumstances should require; nor were these left destitute of proper assistances, though not distinguished by such eminent endowments as the former. Now the intent of all these institutions, offices, and

12 For the perfect- 12

[k] *And some pastors and teachers.*] I shall not take upon me to determine whether *two different offices* are intended here, of which *the former* were intrusted with the care and oversight of particular churches, whereas *the latter* only were employed in instructing the people by way of exhortation, without being called to the *pastoral office*; though, if this were the case, it seems most probable they would have been expressed distinctly as the others are; *and some pastors, and some teachers.*—But I cannot forbear saying, it has been justly observed, that if Diocesan bishops were the very remedy by which the Holy Ghost designed to prevent, or to heal those schisms of which the Ephesian church was in such apparent danger, (Acts xx. 29, 30.) it is very strange there should be no mention of them amidst all these ecclesiastics which are here enumerated, though some of them inferior to the supposed bishop in dignity.

CHAP. VII. Ephes. IV. 12.

gifts, was *for the perfecting of saints*, or finishing the character of holy men who should be destined *to the work of the ministry*[l], in subordination *to the* great view that is still to be maintained, of building up and *edifying of* the church, which is *the body of Christ*, that its numbers may be increased, and each member advanced in knowledge and in grace; *Till we all arrive at the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge* or acknowledgment *of the Son of God*, in such entire harmony and agreement as will cement us together in still dearer bonds; and getting above that infant-state in which so many of us now are, we shall grow up *to* the maturity of *a perfect man*, even *to the* full *measure of the* spiritual *stature*, so as to reach what may be called the standard *of the fulness of Christ*[m], attaining to those eminent degrees of grace and goodness which will fit us to become his stated everlasting residence, and to be filled with the most glorious tokens of his presence and favour.

ing of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 In the mean time, it is the design of God by these means to give us greater firmness and establishment in religion, *that we may be no longer* like little *children tossed to and fro* as waves of the sea, *and borne about* as a vapour in the air, *with every wind of doctrine*, and every vain puff of breath, uttered with violence and eagerness, and as it were mechanically managed *by the cheating sleight of* designing and interested *men*, [*and*] *by* their various *subtilty in every method of deceit*[n], which some insinuating teachers will

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

[l] *For the perfecting of saints to the work of the ministry.*] Bishop Burnet understands the former clause, of their being *initiated into the church* by the holy ordinance of *baptism*. (See Burnet on the Articles, p. 282.) Others would render πρὸς τον καταρτισμον, *for the compacting*, &c. as if it signified their being *brought together* and united into one society whether they had been formerly Jews or Gentiles. But I rather think, with Dr. Marshall, the clauses are to be connected, and may more properly be rendered (as in Blackwall's Sacred Classics, Vol. II. p. 174,) *For the fitting of holy men to the work of the ministry*; which strongly implies by the way, that *no unholy man* should be employed in it. And thus there can be no necessity to suppose a transposition of the words with Grotius, as if the meaning were, *For the work of the ministry* which is *to perfect the saints, and to edify the body of Christ.*

[m] *To the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*] The sense given in the paraphrase is so obvious, and suits and illustrates the peculiarity of the phrase so well, that I cannot but wonder at the impertinence of those who (as Dr. Lightfoot tells us in his Remains, p. 289) have inferred from this text, that the *saints* should be *raised* at the last day exactly of the *age of Christ* when he died, and that their *stature* should be just the *same* with his; referring to the ambiguity of the word ηλικια, as signifying both *stature* and *age*.

[n] *By the cheating sleight of men,* [*and*] *by*

SECT. VII.

not fail to exercise upon you, though I hope you will be able to discern and defeat it: *But maintaining the truth in love,*[o] or stedfastly adhering to the doctrines of the gospel with that candid and charitable temper which it inculcates, and without which our clearest and most extensive knowledge will do us but little good, *may* we *grow up in all things*, from an infant to an adult state, *into him who is the Head* [*even*] the Lord Jesus *Christ*, the great Centre of union, as well as the original Source of life and motion: And by the constant exercise of mutual affection may we be more and more united to him, *from whom*, as from the head, conveying influence and nourishment to every member, *the whole body* of Christians, *being harmoniously joined, and* strongly *cemented together* in the closest union *by the supply of every joint* through proper channels of communication (as by the veins and arteries, the nerves and sinews, in the natural body,) *according to the energy* which is *proportionable to* the necessity of *every part*, and properly adapted to its respective place and function, *makes an* uniform and happy *increase of the* whole *body*, by the regular growth and nourishment of each member, *to the edifying of itself in love*: or, in plainer terms, the whole church, by the exercise of faith in Christ as its glorious Head, is edified and supported, and each part of it grows in mutual love in proportion to the degree of its regard to him.

Eph. IV. 15.

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, *even* Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.

16

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1

If Divine grace have taught us to know the hope of our calling, it will surely add great weight to these pathetic exhortations of this faithful servant and prisoner of Jesus Christ, to walk worthy of it; to walk as it becomes those to do who have been fa-

their subtilty in every method of deceit.] The word κυβεια, as many critics have observed, properly signifies the *artifice* of those infamous gamesters who know how *to cog the dice*. Some would render the last words, τη πανουργια προς την μεθοδειαν της πλανης, *by craft and doubling according to the subtile method of imposture*; but I think the rendering above is more literal, and am in part obliged to Mr. Blackwall for the version and paraphrase here. See his Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 305.

[o] *Maintaining the truth in love.*] It is to be hoped that no reader, and especially none of the sacred order, will fail to observe what the apostle here so plainly asserts, namely, that it was the design of the ministry to preserve *peace* and *charity*, as well as *orthodoxy*, *regularity*, and *discipline* in the church.

SECT. VII. voured with a call from God, who have received the honour of a call to the blessings of his gospel, to the privileges and hopes of his children. It will teach us that humility, meekness, and
Verse 2 long-suffering, of which our Divine Saviour was so glorious an example, which will engage us to the exercise of mutual forbearance, and which so well suits those whom he hath brought into so happy a state.

May we all experimentally know the sweetness which attends a constant care to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of
3 peace; that we may labour earnestly to maintain it, and with the utmost diligence may guard against those things which might lead us in any degree to violate it!

4 To engage us to this, let those arguments which the apostle suggests, be familiar to our mind. Do we not all indeed belong to one body, however called by different denominations? Have we not all, so far as we are truly Christians, received one Spirit? Is there not one hope of our common calling, even that of dwelling together in one and the same blissful world, with God, and
5 with each other? Have we not one Lord, even Jesus Christ, to whom we all equally profess subjection? who hath taught us one faith, who hath instituted one baptism, and who hath introduced
6 and consecrated us to one God and Father of all? And what are the considerations which should prevail so far as to divide us, when compared with such bonds of union as these?

Let us all therefore, in the name of this God, who is over all, who operates through all, and in us all, in the name of this one Saviour, and one Spirit, (awful and endearing names, into which we were all baptized,) charge it upon our own souls, that we not only do nothing by a factious and uncharitable temper to divide
10 his church, but that we study what we can do to heal its breaches, and to promote its growth and edification. And let us pray, that God would guide and succeed our endeavours for that purpose, and preserve our hearts in such a situation and temper, that we may stand continually willing to give up every temporal interest that may interfere with such a design; yea, and even to make our own blood, if such were the will of God, the cement of those wounds, at which a body so intimately united to Christ has so long been bleeding almost to death.

Were we actually to give such a proof of our regard to it, we could but very imperfectly repay the condescension and love of
9 that Saviour, who for us descended to these low regions of the earth, and dwelt for a while among the dead; and then triumph-
8 antly rising and ascending on high, led those enemies that had before held us in captivity themselves captive, as at his chariot-wheels; and having received gifts for men, scattered them down
10 with such royal munificence, that he might fill all things, and fit his ministers for the offices to which he had destined them.

These his ministers we are taught by this passage to regard

as the special gift of his love to the church, and as such let us adore him for them; not only for apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but also for pastors and teachers. And let us earnestly pray, that through the continued influences of that Spirit which he hath sent down from on high, holy men may in every succeeding age be so perfectly and completely fitted for the work of the ministry, that the body of Christ may be edified; that by this means we may all come to that union, to that strength, to that full maturity, to which by calling us into the fellowship of the gospel he intended to raise us.

SECT. VIII. Verse 11 12 13

In the mean time, while we are advancing towards it, may we rise above that childish weakness which would make us the sport of every wind of doctrine, and a prey to every artifice of designing men. Let us ever maintain a due regard to the united interests of truth and love, that our union with Christ may be secured, and our growth in him more happily and abundantly advanced. 14 15

SECT. VIII.

The apostle urges the converted Ephesians to distinguish themselves from the Gentiles, by the holiness of their behaviour, as they were so much distinguished from them by knowledge and grace; and particularly presses upon them the duties of veracity, meekness, and purity. Eph. IV. 17—30.

EPHESIANS IV. 17.

EPHES. IV. 17.

THIS I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

THIS I say therefore, for your further instruction how to walk worthy of your calling, *and* most earnestly and affectionately *testify* it to you *in the* name of the *Lord, that* now ye are so happily brought into the Christian church, and made partakers of such privileges and advantages, *ye no longer walk*, as alas, ye have so long done, and *as the rest of the Gentiles* who remain unconverted still continue to *walk, in* such a course as plainly shews *the vanity of their mind*, amused with the poor empty trifles of this world, and enslaved to low and mean pursuits, utterly unworthy of their rational nature: *Having the understanding darkened* with respect to spiritual things, by the influence of the prince of darkness upon them, and *being alienated* in affection as well as in their practice *from the life of God*[a],

SECT. VIII. Ephes IV. 17

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, 18

[a] *The life of God.*] I apprehend this does not merely signify a *life prescribed by God* to his people, as Mr. Locke understands it, but that it intimates a *life* con-

SECT. VIII.

Ephes. IV. 18.

from that noble principle of true religion which is indeed the Divine life in the soul, forming it to the service and imitation of him by whom it is implanted; to which they are wholly strangers, and have indeed an utter aversion to it, *by reason of the ignorance* of truth and goodness *that is in them*; yea, *because of the* absolute *blindness* and obstinacy *of their heart*[b], the evil passions of which turn it into a kind of chaos, which will not admit the rays of Divine truth shining around them in the works of creation and providence, by the observation of which they would be formed to much better notions, even on natural principles, if they would but do justice to themselves. But alas, what can be expected from wretches who have debauched their consciences with such a course of profligate immoralities, as to have lost all sense of shame? *who being grown* quite callous (as it were) and *insensible* to all goodness, *have abandoned themselves* to every kind of enormity, and especially *to* the grossest *lewdness*, so as *to work all uncleanness with* insatiable *greediness*; transgressing the bounds, not only of virtue and decency, but even of natural appetite, and shamefully soliciting their own lusts, under a sad incapacity of nobler and more rational enjoyments.

through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

19 Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;

20 Into such profligate and brutal sensualities as these, the heathen world are sunk; *but ye have not so learned Christ*[c], as if his religion were a

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

sisting in a righteous and holy *imitation* of his perfections, and a constant *devotedness* to his service; and perhaps it may also intimate its being originally *derived* from him. Compare ver. 24.

[b] *Because of the blindness of their heart.*] This is explained by Chrysostom, Dr. Whitby, and other commentators of note, both ancient and modern, as referring to their Gentile state; but though there is no doubt but it refers to that, yet I see no reason to limit such a description only to the dark and ignorant heathens: it is, as Dr. Owen observes, too just a representation of the *natural blindness* of men in their unregenerate state.—How the words νοῦς, διάνοια and καρδία, which all come into this description, are to be distinguished, is matter of much debate. It is certain they are used in different senses, not only by different writers, but by the same writers in different places: but on the whole, it seems most probable to me, that νοῦς here signifies *the mind* in general, comprehending *under the intellectual faculties*, and καρδία, the *affections* and *passions*; by the irregularity and obstinacy of which *the understanding* is often obscured, and led into the falsest and most irrational judgments. See below, note [h] on ver. 23.

[c] *Ye have not so learned Christ.*] This may perhaps intimate that there was a *manner* of *learning Christ*, which might seem more consistent with such irregularities, and may glance on some teachers who called themselves Christians, and yet took very little care to inculcate practical religion. Many passages in the apostle's writings shew this to have

mere system of speculation, that might leave you practically attached to such abominable vices. Its precepts inculcate upon you lessons of the strictest purity, and I am persuaded that you feel the genuine tendency and design of it in your hearts, powerfully inclining you to act upon them; *seeing ye have* in effect *heard him*,[d] even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, speaking to you in his word by us his authorised ambassadors, *and have been instructed in him* and his religion, *as the* uncorrupted *truth is in Jesus*, and not in that imperfect and adulterated form in which some presume to deliver what they call his gospel.

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

Give me leave therefore to urge and entreat you, according to the many good instructions you have already received, *to put off*, and entirely to lay aside, *with respect to the former conversation*,[e] or to those sinful habits and practices which were the scandal and dishonour of your Gentile days, *the old man*,[f] *which is* depraved and *corrupt* in every part of it, and whose actions are directed, not by the rules of reason, and a regard to the will of God, but *according to* those *deceitful lusts*[g] which generally prevail in the world, and once prevailed in you likewise,

22 That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

been actually the case, though it seems these teachers had not much footing at Ephesus. Compare 2 Tim. iv. 3.

[d] *Seeing ye have heard him.*] That the particle εἴγε may be thus rendered, has been observed before in note [b] on Eph. iii. 2, p. 125. So that no conclusion can be drawn from hence that this epistle was not written to the Ephesians, with whom he had long been conversant, but to some other church that he had never seen, and with whose circumstances he was not so well acquainted.

[e] *To put off*, &c.] As the verbs ἀπόθεσθαι, ἀνανεοῦσθαι, and ἐνδύσασθαι, are all in the *infinitive mood*, it shews how they are connected with the preceding words, and that the sense of them is, "*Ye have been* "*instructed—to put off the old man, and to* "*be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and* "*to put on the new man*;" accordingly I have preserved this connection in the version, but, to avoid such an excessive length in the paraphrase as would have made it both disagreeable and obscure, I have here, as in many other places, broken one sentence into several.

[f] *The old man.*] As particular *dispositions of mind* are sometimes expressed by particular *garments* when a man appears in them, so the whole of a good or bad character may be represented by *a complete dress*, yea, by the *body* in which he appears; and *vice*, alas, being too *natural*, and getting the first possession, whereas *goodness*, if it ever succeeds at all, is adventitious, the former may well be called *the old*, and the latter *the new man*.

[g] *According to deceitful lusts.*] Some have explained this of the lusts into which they were led by the artifices of the heathen priests, who represented them as not disagreeable to their established deities; or by the sophistry of their philosophers, who found out so many fallacious excuses for the grossest vices. But the sense given in the paraphrase seems most certain, and of the most general importance; considerations which I have always endeavoured to keep in view in the whole of this work.

SECT. VIII.

Ephes. IV. 22

and sunk you into so degenerate a state; lusts, which could lead you to no rational and solid happiness, but deluded you by vain appearances and fallacious hopes, which always ended in your disappointment and shame: *And* labour more and more, by cultivating every motion of the good Spirit of God upon your hearts, *to be renewed in the Spirit of your mind*,[h] that your rational powers, being duly directed by his illumination, may maintain a proper command over all the inferior faculties of your nature, and unite them in the prosecution of that great end which you ought continually to be proposing to yourselves. *And* thus, let it be your care *to put on the new man*, to clothe yourselves with every habit of virtue and goodness, with every pious principle and disposition, belonging to the character of such as are renewed; even that new man, *which is created* by Divine grace, *according to* [*the image of*] *God*, the great Standard of perfection, and is so formed as to resemble him *in* universal *righteousness and true* evangelical *holiness*,[i] which, so far as it prevails in the human soul, is indeed the likeness of God, drawn upon it in the most amiable lineaments. (Compare Col. iii. 10.)

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 *Wherefore*, on these great principles, beware of every vice to which you have been formerly addicted; and in particular, *putting away every lie*,[k] whatever any of the heathens may have taught or practised, *speak every one* of you with the greatest simplicity and strictness, the exact *truth to his neighbour; for we are* all (as I ob-

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.

[h] *In the spirit of your mind.*] The word πνευμα seems here to be put for *the whole soul*, and συνεσις, *the mind*, for its *intellectual* and leading *faculty*, on which the *Spirit of* God might chiefly operate, yet not exclusive of some influence on the *inferior* powers. See 1 Thess. v. 23, and compare note [b] above on ver. 18.

[i] *True holiness.*] As οσιοτης της αληθειας stands in a beautiful opposition to επιθυμιαι της απατης, *deceitful lusts*, I have chosen therefore, with our translation, to render it in a similar manner. But Archbishop Tillotson would translate this clause, *the holiness of truth*, (Vol. II. p. 349,) and Dr. Owen also prefers this rendering, by truth understanding the gospel, and so explaining it of evangelical holiness, in opposition to such mere moral virtues as might be found in an heathen. See Dr. Owen on the Spirit, p. 325.

[k] *Every lie.*] This το ψευδος seems to express, and *lying* is so opposite to that *sincerity* which becomes a Christian, that what is said against it may be best taken in the most extensive sense.—Dr. Whitby has well shewn, in his note on this passage, that several of the best of the heathen moralists thought *lying* might in many cases be *justified*; and I wish that none but heathens had ever taught so loose and dangerous a doctrine.

served above,) by virtue of our union to Christ our common Head, *members one of another*, and therefore it would be very indecent and improper, for the sake of any little separate advantage of our own, to injure or deceive a fellow-member, which indeed the common bond of humanity might lead us to detest, if the peculiar engagements of our holy profession were not considered. SECT. VIII. Ephes. IV. 25

26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

If any occasion arises which obliges you to *be angry*, which indeed may, and often will be the case, let not your anger discompose your spirits, *and sin not* in the excessive indulgence of that turbulent and dangerous passion;[l] but see that there be justifiable cause for the resentment you express, and that your anger do not then rise beyond its proper degree, nor err in its continuance: and in this view, *let not the sun*, however, *go down upon your wrath*,[m] lest it grow into inveterate malice and habitual spleen: 26

27 Neither give place to the devil.

Neither in this respect *give place to the devil*, who labours as much as possible to possess and enflame the spirits of men with mutual enmity, and to induce them to give ear to slanderous reports and accusations, that he may make their characters deformed, and their state miserable like his own. 27

28 Let him that stole, steal no more:

Let him that, while he was in his heathen condition of ignorance and vice, *stole* from others what was their just property, or in any other method defrauded his neighbour, *steal* and defraud *no more*,[n] knowing that God is the avenger 28

[l] *Be ye angry, and sin not.*] It is evident that this is not a *command* to *be angry*, but a *concession* only, with a *caution* to beware of *sinning* in it. (Compare Isa. viii. 9, 10; and Nah. iii. 14, 15.) It must however imply the thing to be possible; for to imagine, as a celebrated divine does, that it is as if it were said, *Do if you can be angry without sin*, seems beneath the dignity which the apostle always preserves in his writings.

[m] *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*] Many have observed that this was agreeable to the Pythagorean practice, who used always, if the members of their particular society had any difference with each other, to give *tokens of reconciliation* before *the sun went down*. (See Dr. Scott's Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 326; and Dr. Whitby's note on this place.) Were family prayer always practised in the evening, it might have an happy tendency to promote the observation of this excellent precept, intended (no doubt) to prevent persons going to sleep in anger, or being kept wakeful by such thoughts as continued quarrels, especially between near relations and friends, will be apt to occasion. Gloomy meditations in the silence of the night inflame the sense of the supposed injury, and cherish fiercer resentments, till perhaps at length purposes and counsels of revenge succeed. See Limborch Theolog. lib. v. cap. 45, sect. vi.

[n] *Let him that stole, steal no more.*]

SECT. VIII.

of all such injuries: (compare 1 Thes. iv. 6.) *But rather let him labour* diligently, *working with* [*his*] *hands* in some honest employment Ephes. IV. 28. *that which is good* and creditable; that he may not only support himself, without trespassing upon society, or being in any respect a burden to it, but *that he may have* [*something*] *to impart to the necessitous*, and may be capable of sparing somewhat out of what he gains by industry in his calling, for the relief of such as stand in need of it.

but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 *Let* me exhort you also to take heed that *no corrupt discourse*, no putrid, filthy, and offensive speech, *proceed out of your mouth*,[o] to debauch the minds of those that are about you, and to irritate those irregular dispositions of the heart, which it may, in many instances, even without such incentives, be so difficult to restrain: *but* embrace every opportunity that may conveniently be taken of introducing *any thing that is good*,[p] and which may tend *to useful edification*, *that* you may thus by your discourse promote the spiritual benefit of those that you converse with, and *it may* rather serve to *minister grace to the hearers*, than to check any good, or encourage any evil and irregular thoughts.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 *And* on the whole, be very careful that you *do not*, by any such immoralities as I have cau-

30 And grieve not

Stealing (as Dr. Whitby has well shewn here) was a very common vice among the heathens: but how justifiable soever the Lacedæmonian law relating to it might be in a political view, (of which see Rollin, Man. de Etudier, Vol. III. p. 341, & seq.) I fear it tended to abate the horror persons should have of invading, in any respect the property of each other, and to corrupt the minds of young people, by forming them to a subtle and knavish turn, which, however it might fit them for plundering their enemies in war (to which the genius of that commonwealth was too much directed,) would certainly tend to make them bad children, servants, and citizens.

(Col. iv. 6.) as tending to preserve from such putrefaction and rottenness. It is strange that such indecencies as are here censured should ever prevail, especially among persons whose rank in life requires a politeness of behaviour which would engage them to guard against this, much more than against any thing offensive in their person or dress.

o *Let no corrupt discourse*, &c.] This undoubtedly refers to *obscene talk*, which is with great propriety called *corrupt* or *putrid*, as the word σαπρος signifies, in direct opposition to that which is *seasoned with salt*, and is recommended,

p *Any thing that is good.*] This seems the proper import of τι της αγαθης, which is literally, *if any thing be good*; intimating that if any *useful thought* arise, or an occasion may be fitly taken to graft an edifying remark on any thing that passes in conversation, there should be a readiness to improve it; that so every one may furnish out his quota, without unprofitable and disagreeable chasms of silence, or the necessity of having recourse to any thing that is ill to prevent them; which, alas, is too often the case.

the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

tioned you against, *grieve that Holy Spirit of God*, and provoke him to withdraw his gracious and comfortable influences from your minds; seeing it is this Spirit *by whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption*[q]. His operations are the mark of God set upon you, by which you may be known to be his property, and may be assured that he will remember you as such, in that great day when he makes up his jewels; even then when he completely redeems and delivers all his people: till which blessed time, you are preserved in your adherence to religion by this Spirit, in the midst of all the dangers and difficulties which surround you; and consequently are obliged always to conduct yourselves toward him with the greatest respect and veneration.

SECT. VIII.

Ephes. IV. 30.

IMPROVEMENT.

THAT we are all naturally so much *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in us*, that *our minds* are naturally so *dark*, and our *hearts* so *hard*, is indeed matter of the justest lamentation. But since we have learned Christ, since the light of his blessed gospel hath been imparted to us, and we are no longer numbered among the heathen nations, let us not abandon ourselves to those irregularities of temper and life, for which even their ignorance will not be a sufficient excuse; since even natural light might teach them to condemn and to abhor such courses. 14, 18, 20

There are deceitful lusts, according to which the old man is corrupt: let us be always on our guard against them, and labour after such a renovation as becomes our profession; and, in order to its being effectual, let us be earnestly solicitous to obtain it in the spirit of our mind; that we may shew its influence upon us, not merely by ceasing to do evil, but by learning to the utmost of our power to do good. Thus let it be our care to put on the new man, to be partakers of a new and holy nature, and to be brought to the whole of that temper in all its branches, by which 22, 23, 24

[q] *By whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*] This term of *sealing* seems to be a metaphor taken from merchants putting some *seal* or *mark* upon their commodities, by which they may be known to be *theirs*. One of the ancients somewhere says, "*Delicatus res est Spiritus Dei:*" *There is*, if we may so express it, *a certain delicacy in the Spirit of God*, which should engage those who desire his influences, solicitously to guard against every approach to what might be grossly offensive to him.—*The day of redemption* in this connection must signify *the resurrection*, (compare Rom. viii. 23); which is here mentioned with the greatest propriety as the time when they, who in consequence of this *sealing*, should be finally owned as *the property of God*, shall be gathered *into his treasury*.—To πνευμα το αγιον του Θεου, is so emphatical, that it seemed best to render it, *that Holy Spirit of God*.

SECT. VIII. we shall resemble the blessed God, the bright Original of universal righteousness and holiness, and the great Model of perfection.

In consequence of this, remembering our relation to each other,
Ver. 25 let us speak the truth from our hearts; and upon all occasions let us treat others with the same candour and integrity with which we would ourselves desire to be treated.—If anger rise, let
26 it be on just occasions, and in due proportion; and let us take care that it rest not in our bosoms, lest by indulging it we give
27 place to the devil, and become like that malignant spirit.—Let us be upright in our dealings, and, conscientiously avoiding the iniquitous practice of defrauding others, let generous and chari-
28 table sentiments always possess us; nor let those whose circumstances in life may constrain them to maintain themselves by their own labour, think they may violate the strictest rules of honesty, or are dispensed with from all obligations to relieve others, more necessitous than themselves.—In short, whenever we en-
29 gage in conversation, let us avoid every thing that may have the remotest tendency to corrupt discourse; and let us study what may improve and edify the minds of our hearers; embracing every opportunity of suggesting any thing that is good, and that may tend to minister grace, or to promote the more abundant exercise of it in the minds of those in whom it is already implanted.

Thus will the Spirit of God, that sacred Agent by whom we
30 are sealed to the day of redemption, be delighted, instead of being grieved, as he so frequently is by the vain and foolish discourses of those who would be thought his temples, of those who indeed are so. For his influences let us look, to dispose us to every good word and work, and seasonably to remind us of these plain but weighty admonitions, which, alas, are so little remembered by the generality of Christians, that one would imagine they had scarce ever read them.

SECT. IX.

The apostle pursues the practical exhortations given in the two former sections, and especially insists on those to mutual love, which he enforces by the consideration of the Divine compassions as displayed in the gospel, and strongly cautions them against the gross impurities of the heathens. Eph. IV. 31, *to the end.* V. 1—14.

EPHESIANS IV. 31.

AS I have been exhorting you to take heed that you do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, I cannot but particularly caution you

EPHES. IV. 31. LET all bitterness,

and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

against those malignant passions which do most directly oppose his benign influences. And therefore *let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamour, and evil speaking,* and all contentions and ungovernable passions, *be put away from you,* and removed to the greatest distance, together *with all malice*[a]: do not passionately resent every trifle, nor bitterly inveigh with all the licentiousness and keenness of satire against those who have greatly injured you; nor let your anger be noisy in its language, venting itself in clamorous reproaches and abusive railings, or be deeply treasured up in the mind to wait for opportunities of revenge; for all these things are most contrary to the nature of God, the genius of Christianity, and the character of its great Founder. *But,* on the contrary, *be* courteous and *obliging to each other* in your daily deportment, and *tenderly compassionate* towards those that are in any affliction and distress; *freely forgiving one another* whatever imagined or real injury may be in question, *even as God in Christ,* and for his sake, *hath freely forgiven you*[b] such inexcusable and heinous injuries and affronts, as are infinitely greater than any which it is possible for you to receive from your fellow-creatures.

SECT. IX. Ephes. IV. 31.

32 And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

32

Chap. V. 1. Be therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Be ye therefore, in the exercise of kindness and forgiveness towards one another, *imitators of* that *God*[c] to whom ye are under such un-

Chap. V. 1.

[a] *Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath,* &c.] If each different word that is here made use of is to have a different idea annexed to it, I suppose the explication given in the paraphrase may illustrate its signification. But perhaps, after all, it might only be the apostle's design, in amassing so many almost synonymous expressions together, to shew that he would have them be upon their guard against *all the malevolent passions,* and those outrages of speech and expression which they tend to produce.—The like remark may be applied to many other passages of scripture, and particularly to those where all kinds of lewdness are forbidden in such a variety of phrase and language.

[b] *Even as God in Christ hath freely forgiven you.*] This plainly teaches us that the great doctrine of the *atonement* or *satisfaction* of our blessed Redeemer is always to be explained *in such a manner* as may leave room for the honour of *God's free grace and mercy,* in the pardon of our offences consequent upon it.

[c] *Be ye therefore imitators of God.*] This, as it is an inference from the last verse of the preceding chapter, ought by no means to have been separated from it; and, as the apostle is pursuing here the exhortation which he there began to *mutual love and forgiveness,* and does not finish it till the end of the next verse, it had been much more proper that the two first verses of this chapter should have been connected with what goes before, and that this chapter should have begun with ver. 31 of the former.

SECT. IX.

Ephes. V. 2.

speakable obligations, *as* his *beloved children*, whom he hath not only forgiven after so many and great offences, but adopted into his family, and raised to such glorious privileges: *And*, as a demonstration of your readiness to please and honour so gracious a Father, see that ye *walk in love*, and steadily pursue the paths of benevolence and goodness; which ye are under additional engagements to do, *as Christ also hath loved us* in so wonderful a degree, *and* hath manifested his love to us at so expensive a rate, that he *hath* even *given himself up for us*, voluntarily surrendering himself up to those cruel enemies whom he could with infinite ease have destroyed, (compare John xviii. 6;) and, having submitted to become their captive, he yielded up his life upon the cross, and was there made *an offering and sacrifice to God*[d]; for it is evident, that in this view his death was intended by himself, and was regarded also by the Father, who was well pleased, not only with the variety of virtues and graces which he exercised in it, but with the atonement that was made by it, and gratefully accepted it *for a sweet smelling savour*, or as a fragrant odour that was far more delightful than any of the victims, or any of the perfumes, which had been offered of old, whether on the brazen or the golden altar: and through him also will your acts of liberality, beneficence, and goodness, come up before God as a grateful memorial, and draw down upon you the most valuable blessings.

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

3 *But*, as you expect this, you must make it your care to maintain a due consistency of character, avoiding not only all malignant passions, but every kind and degree of impurity and li-

3 But fornication,

[d] *An offering and sacrifice to God.*] Dr. Bates (in his Harmony of the Divine Attributes, p. 254) thinks, that the different words, προσφορὰν and θυσίαν, are used in reference to *the peace offering* and *the free-offering*, as the truth of both is in the *sacrifice of Christ*, which appeased God, and obtains the blessings consequent upon his favour. But I cannot lay much stress on this distinction, as προσφέρω is used in a multitude of places in the Septuagint for presenting *any victim* before God, as it is likewise in the New Testament (Mat. v. 23, 24,) for *bringing a gift*, and *offering it* on the altar; and when distinguished from θυσία (Psal. xl. 6, Septuag.) it answers to מנחה, the *mincha*, or offering of *fine flour*, with a proper quantity of *wine*, *oil*, and *frankincense*, with which the sacrifices of animals were to be attended, and thus to be presented as *an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord.* (See Lev. ii. 1—9, and Numb. xv. 3—14.)—It may here be used in conjunction with the former, to signify the *completeness* of the sacrifice.

and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints:

centiousness: and therefore *let not fornication,* SECT. IX.
nor any kind of uncleanness,[e] *or insatiable desire* of sensual gratifications or of the means of procuring them,[f] *be so much as named,* or heard of, *among you;* but abstain from these evils, and whatever might lead to them, *as it becometh saints,* who are conscious of the sanctity of their name and profession, and dread the thoughts of debasing it. Eph. v. 3.

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

4 And in this view let there be *neither filthiness,* or any shameful indecency in conversation, found among you, *nor foolishness of speech, nor* those *lewd turns* and ambiguities of expression,[g] *which* though they are practised by the heathens, and may not seem so evidently criminal, yet *are by no means convenient* for Christian converts: *but rather* abound in the language of *thanksgiving* and devotion, to which we have so many obligations in every circumstance, and which would give a pleasure so much more sublime than any animal indulgences and delights.

5 For this ye know, That no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater,

5 See then that you be cautiously and resolutely on your guard against all such enormities; *for ye* well *know,* and have been taught *this,* as ye have learned Christ, *that no fornicator, nor unclean person,* who habitually gives himself up to any kind of pollution, *nor* any *covetous man,* who is greedy of those things which minister to his sensual appetite, and *who is* therefore *an idolater*[h] of the worst kind, deifying as it were the

[e] *Nor any kind of uncleanness.*] This is beyond all controversy the meaning of και πασα ακαθαρσια: and had I been more literal, and rendered it *let not all sort of uncleanness be mentioned,* the sense had not been given so exactly, and occasion might be taken for grounding an evasion on it, for which the different genius of the Greek language lays no just foundation. See the original of Acts xx. 25, and note [o] on that text, Vol. III. p. 303.

[f] *Or insatiable desire,* &c.] This is certainly a very literal rendering of the Greek word πλεονεξιαν, which plainly signifies *the desire of having more* of any thing whatever it be. And as there was nothing indecent in the mention of covetousness, in the usual sense of it, as expressing a greedy desire of riches and gain, many good commentators suppose it refers to that inordinate desire of *unnatural lust* for which the Gentiles were so infamous, and to which the Ephesians were so much addicted, as being in consequence of their riches a very luxurious and debauched people. Compare Ezek. xvi. 28, 29.

[g] *Nor those lewd turns,* &c.] This seems the natural import of the word ευτραπελια, on which many might value themselves as what they apprehended *a delicate turn* given to some ambiguous expression, and Aristotle in his Ethicks, using this very word, recommends it as what renders conversation agreeable.—Dr. Lucas thinks it included wantonness, profaneness, and keenness of satire. See his Inquiry after happiness, Vol. III. p. 207.

[h] *Nor covetous man, who is an idolater.*] In whatever sense *covetousness* is used (see

SECT. IX.

vilest idols, *hath* or can have *any inheritance in the* holy and happy *kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one* then, in this respect, amuse
Ephes. v. 6. and *deceive you with vain words* and sophistical arguments, by which it is well known that many, and especially some that call themselves philosophers, attempt to vindicate some of these things, or at least to extenuate the evil of them; *for* I am divinely commissioned to assure you, that *on account of these things*, and such as these, *the wrath of God cometh* even *on* the Gentiles, *the children of disobedience* and infidelity: now if heathens are punished for them, much less can we suppose that professing Christians, who have so much greater advantages for purity and virtue in all its branches, and are under such peculiar engagements to cultivate it, shall escape with impunity in these shameful practices.

7 *Be ye not therefore partakers with them* in these abominations now, if ye would not finally partake in that dreadful condemnation and misery which they are bringing on themselves by them.

8 *For ye were once* indeed in a state of gross and heathenish *darkness*, in which it is no wonder you were abandoned to such practices, as you had no just discernment of the sinfulness and danger of them; *but now* [*ye are*] *light in the Lord*, and are brought into a clear evangelical day, as being instructed by the word of God, and savingly illuminated by his Spirit: see therefore that you *walk* in such a manner *as* becomes those who are *children of light*, and desire to do an honour to that light of which they are born, and to that celestial family to which they now
9 belong. *For* ye cannot pretend to be ignorant of the duties becoming such a birth and relation, as *the fruit of the* Holy *Spirit*,[1] by which you are regenerated, [*is*] most evidently manifested *in* the practice of *all goodness, and*

ter, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be ye not therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are* ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, and righte-

note (above,) it may be called *idolatry*; as it is setting up something else, and (be it what it will) something comparatively very base and contemptible, and pursuing it, as if it were something that could be to us, as in the place of God, a supreme happiness.

[1] *The fruit of the Spirit.*] It may be sufficient briefly to observe, that for πνευματος; some copies read φωτος, *the fruit of the light*. The sense is the same, but the number of varying manuscripts seems not sufficient to confirm that reading. Yet I have had some regard to it in the paraphrase, as in some other instances of a like nature.

ou ness, and truth;) *righteousness, and truth*; the operations of it on the soul being attended with such light and influence, as to teach men of all ranks, orders, and conditions in life, invariably to observe the strictest rules of benevolence in their tempers, integrity in their dealings, and sincerity and veracity in their words. Be careful therefore to cultivate these dispositions, *proving* thereby *what is well-pleasing to the Lord*, and making the experiment how happy they are who in all things govern themselves according to his injunctions. sect. 18. Ephes. v. 9.

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

10

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Walk then, as I have said, in such a manner as becomes children of light, *and be not joint partakers* with any about you *in the unfruitful works of darkness*;[k] works which, far from being in any respect profitable or advantageous, are in their consequences most pernicious, tending to involve the soul in the gloom of guilt, and to lead it down to everlasting darkness: and therefore how excusable soever these things might be accounted in your heathen state, they are apparently most unbecoming in the midst of Christian knowledge and privileges; and, as you would not practise them yourselves, see to it that you do not countenance or encourage others in them, or by any means make yourselves accessary to the evil they occasion, *but rather reprove them* with plainness, though at the same time with all meekness and humility, and more especially express your detestation of them by your good conversation in Christ. There is indeed a great deal you will meet with to reprove, and in some instances the reproof is better given by actions than by words: *for it is really a shame even to speak* particularly *of those things which are done by them in secret*, and sometimes in what they call their religious mysteries too,[l] many of them being of such a nature,

11

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

12

[k] *The unfruitful works of darkness.*] It is well known, that ἀκαρπος in Greek, and *inutilis* in Latin, are sometimes used to express not only *unprofitable*, but *mischievous things*; and this is undoubtedly the meaning of the original word here. Compare Rom. i. 29; and vi. 21.

[l] *A shame to speak of those things which are done in secret.*] See Dr. Whitby's note on this text concerning the impure and abominable nature of some religious nocturnal *mysteries* of the heathen. The quotations there brought, with many others which might be added to them, plainly prove, that if (as the learned Mr. Warburton supposes,) the lower sort of *mysteries* among them were first intended by the magistrates to impress the minds of the

SECT. IX. that the very mention of them has a tendency to taint the mind, as well as to shock all chaste and modest ears.

Ephes. v. 13. *But* to you that are light in the Lord, the vileness of these works of darkness is abundantly discovered, as *all things which are* such as ought to be *reproved*, have their iniquity laid open, and *are made manifest by the light*; since where the light of the gospel comes, even though they are not particularly mentioned and described, yet they are exposed and condemned, and the soul which receives it is inspired with an abhorrence for what might any way lead to them: *for whatsoever doth make* objects *manifest* in their proper forms and colours, *is light*; and therefore the gospel well deserves that name, as teaching those who are instructed in it to judge rightly concerning the moral nature of actions, and inculcating such general principles as will be of use to them in every particular case that can possibly arise. *Wherefore* when God is speaking in the prophecies of the Old Testament of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the light which they should have by Christ, *he says* in effect to those who are yet in darkness, though not exactly in these words, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*;[m] and this particularly is the most natural import of those well-known words in Isaiah, (chap. lx. 1.) "Arise, shine, for thy "light is come, and the glory of the Lord is

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

people with the belief and sense of *future* rewards and punishments, and the higher sort of them to instruct persons of more reflection and penetration than the rest in the *knowledge* of the true God, and the other great principles of *natural religion*, they were long before the apostle's time greatly corrupted and degraded to the most detestable purposes: so that some persons in public characters, by no means remarkable for the purity of their own morals, thought it absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the most scandalous and profligate disorders, to prohibit the celebration of them.—Mons. Saurin has observed a sarcasm in this clause seldom attended to, as if it were insinuated here, They are called *μυστηρια, things not to be spoken of*; true, says the apostle, they are properly so; things not too sacred, but too *infamous* to be mentioned. See his Sermons, Vol. VIII. p. 198.

[m] *Awake, thou that sleepest*, &c.] Some think this passage is taken from an apocryphal book ascribed to Jeremiah, which, says the learned and eloquent Mons. Saurin, might really contain some prophecies delivered by him, and so by the way be quoted by Matthew, (chap. xxvii. 9.) who might know that the prophecy recorded by Zechariah, (chap. xi. 12.) was originally spoken or written by the elder prophet. Saurin, Serm. Vol. X. p. 286. But the sense of the passage before us is so fairly deducible from the words of Isaiah quoted in the paraphrase, that I do not see any necessity of having recourse to this supposition.

" risen upon thee ;" that is to say, The Messiah, represented by the glory of the Lord, shines in his church, shines upon the souls of particular persons; and then they arise as from the dead, and shake off their deep sleep ; they rejoice in the light, they walk in it, and reflect it all around them, so that many others are awakened and transformed by it. SECT. IX. Ephes V. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE obligations which as Christians we lie under to cultivate benevolence and purity, are common to all countries and to all ages. Let us therefore frequently read over these plain exhortations, and solemnly charge our souls with their Divine authority and importance.

Let it not be enough to us that we carefully avoid *all bitterness and wrath, clamour and evil-speaking ;* but let us cherish all the kind affections of *mutual love and tenderness*, and practise even the most difficult duties of *charity*, freely *forgiving* those that have injured us, as sensible how much greater offences *God has forgiven us ;* always remembering whose children we are, and what engagements we are under to imitate our heavenly Father; and always setting before our eyes *the love of Christ*, who *gave himself for us*, and thereby *offered a most pleasing sacrifice to God*. Through him shall our sacrifices proceeding from the same principle be acceptable also to him, even the sacrifices of alms, of prayer, and of praise. Chap. iv. 31, 32 Chap. v. 1, 2

Let us not only abstain from the grossest sensual indulgences, but from every thing indecent in our words and actions: and, that we may do so, let us make a covenant, not only with our eyes (Job xxxi. 1), but with our hearts ; remembering, that it is idolatry in the sight of God to set our hearts upon the gross delights of animal nature, to the neglect and forgetfulness of his blessed Majesty ; remembering also, that the kingdom of Christ and of God is intended only for those who by purity of heart are qualified to see and enjoy him. 3, 4, 5

Many false and sophistical reasons men have invented to palliate and excuse their vices; but if the wrath of God fall upon the heathen for these things, let us not imagine that we can practise them with impunity ; and upon no account let us presume to be partakers with them in their sins, that so we may not share with them in their punishment. 6

We are called from darkness into light, from the darkness of sin into the light of grace ; let us remember then the happy state into which we are brought, and walk as children of light, having our conversation such as may be suitable to the character we 7, 8

SECT. IX. bear, and to the obligations we are under by the advantages we enjoy: and searching diligently what is acceptable to the Lord, let us discover and make known to all, that we approve it upon Ver. 10 trial, by our conforming to it, and bringing forth the fruits of goodness, righteousness, and truth, under the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, as those who have been savingly enlightened by him.

11 Let us avoid the works of darkness, not as unfruitful only, but as mischievous and destructive; and be careful that we do in no degree partake of them, not even so much as by a sinful silence, when Providence calls us to reprove them: but let us earnestly pray for wisdom and grace, to order these reproofs in the wisest 13 and happiest manner; that so we may, like that light of which we are the children, not only continue ourselves unsullied in the midst of pollution, but make things manifest in their proper co- 12 lours, and discountenance those indecencies, the shame of which will make the very mention of them odious to the renewed soul, while those that practise them are so far conscious of their vileness, as to endeavour to conceal them from the light, and draw a veil of darkness over them.

14 And O that the almighty voice of God may rouse up and awaken sinners from their sleep, and engage them to arise from the dead, that Christ may give them light! He is the great and only Source of light to sinful creatures, by whom it is sprung up on those who deserved to be consigned over to chains of everlasting darkness. Let us hail the rays of this Sun of righteousness: let us reflect them to his glory: and let it be our concern, that, being raised by him from the sleep of sin, we may spring up to his service with vigour, and prosecute it through all the remainder of our days with becoming gratitude and zeal.

SECT. X.

The apostle farther pursues his exhortations to a life of circumspection and usefulness, and to the constant exercise of temperance and devotion. Eph. V. 15—21.

EPHESIANS. V. 15.

SECT. X. I HAVE been urging you to consider yourselves as children of light, and upon this account to have your conversation such as becomes those Ephes. V. 15. who have been happily awakened from the sleep of sin by Christ: and to pursue the exhortation, as ye thus are brought from darkness into light, *see* to it *therefore that ye walk* as *accurately* and circumspectly as possible, taking the most atten-

EPHES. V. 15. SEE then that ye walk circumspectly

ly, not as fools, but as wise.

tive heed to every step, and conducting yourselves, *not as fools*, who consider not what they are doing, *but as wise men*, who know that they have pressing dangers to avoid, and most important ends to secure. And in particular, let your wisdom be discovered in *redeeming the time*[a], endeavouring to recover and buy back as far as possible what has been lost, by diligently making use of what remains, and studying to improve it to the best and most valuable purposes; for which you should be careful to embrace the present opportunity, *because the days* we live in *are evil*, in which we are on every side surrounded with persecutions, and perils, and God only knows how soon our liberty or our life may be taken away. *Wherefore* while these precarious blessings are continued, employ them for the honour of God, and the good of mankind; and *be not inconsiderate* and thoughtless as you formerly were, *but* be concerned to have a right discernment of your duty, and to be *understanding what* [*is*] *the will of the* great *Lord* to whom you are devoted: endeavour to know your duty in all its extent, and knowing it to act agreeably to the obligations of it; declining those unnecessary dangers to which it is not his will that you should expose yourselves (Mat. x. 22), and diligently laying hold on every opportunity of service.

SECT. X.

Ephes. V. 16.

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

17

18 And be not drunk with wine,

And, that you may neither be insensible of the calls of duty, nor negligent of a due compliance with them, be continually careful that ye *be not*, even before you are aware, *drunk with wine*[b],

18

[a] *Redeeming the time.*] Grotius and many other commentators explain this of the *caution* to be used in *avoiding persecution*, that so they might *draw out their time* as long as possibly they could, and not provoke their enemies to cut them off: compare Dan. ii. 8.—This to be sure was their duty, and it had been well if the zeal of some primitive Christians had regarded the precept in this sense. But I am persuaded this interpretation expresses only a small part of that Christian diligence and prudence to which the apostle meant to direct and exhort us.—Mons. Saurin observes, with his usual accuracy, that the word ἐξαγοραζόμενοι has a peculiar force, and implies (as the French word *racheter* and the English *redeem* also does,) the *recovering what has been lost*: (compare Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4, 5.) And he apprehends there is an allusion to the enormities of their heathen life, in which so much former time had most unhappily been lost and thrown away. See his Sermons, Vol. VIII. p. 196, 197.

[b] *Be not drunk with wine.*] It is highly probable, that here may be a particular reference to those dissolute ceremonies called the *Bacchanalia*, that were celebrated by the heathens in honour of him whom they called *the god of wine*. While these rites continued, men and women

SECT. X.

in which there is so much danger of a dissolute *excess*[c], considering how grossly many abuse it, and abuse themselves by it, so as to run into all manner of extravagance and outrage, and into all that wild disorder and debauchery, for which the heathens are notorious at their idolatrous festivals; *but be ye filled*, as becomes your character, *with the Spirit* of God, and make it your concern to invite the quickening and the cheering influences of his grace, which are of so great moment in your Christian course; but which you will, by an excess of liquor, or any other gross sensualities, drive away from you, as he may be justly displeased with what is so directly opposite to his own pure and holy nature.

Eph. v. 18.

wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit:

19 Let it be your endeavour therefore to engage the gracious visits of the Holy Spirit by the exercise of social devotion, in which he will delight to find you employed; and for which he will render you more and more fit, while in your cheerful moments you are *speaking to yourselves* and to each other *in* the *psalms* with which David and other inspired writers have furnished us, *and* in those new-composed *hymns* of praise, *and* other *spiritual songs*, that is songs on spiritual subjects, which the spirit of God dictates and animates, with a variety adapted to the several occasions of the Christian life: and let it be your great care, that while you are thus tuning your voices, you be also *singing and chanting in your hearts to the Lord*, without which, no external melody, be it ever so exact and harmonious, can be pleasing to his ear.

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord:

20 Yea, let there be a constant disposition for this duty, not only when you engage in social worship, but through the whole course of your

20 Giving thanks

made it a point of religion to intoxicate themselves, and ran about the streets, fields, and vineyards, singing and shouting in a wild and tumultuous manner; in opposition to which extravagant vociferations the use of devout psalmody is with great propriety recommended. Plato somewhere tells us, that there was hardly a sober person to be found in the whole Attican territories during the continuance of these detestable solemnities.

[c] *In which there is excess.*] The word ἀσωτία implies, not only *exceeding the bounds of temperance*, which is the direct import of the English word, but that madness of *licentious riot* which is often the attendant of drunkenness. Wine is so frequently the cause of this, by the ungrateful abuse of the bounty of Providence in giving it, that the enormity is represented by a very strong and beautiful *figure*, as contained in the *very liquor*.

always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

lives; and let the mental songs, if I may so express it, that issue from the grateful sentiments of your hearts, be perpetual and uninterrupted; maintain a most affecting sense of the abundant matter which you have for praise, that, as new mercies are every hour descending upon you, ye may be *always giving thanks for all things*,[d] for all the favours of God imparted to yourselves and others; and make it your employment at all times, not excepting your most afflicted moments, but filling even these with praise, and taking occasion from the tribulations and distresses with which a wise and gracious Providence may exercise you, to acknowledge the Divine goodness which directs all these painful dispensations by views to your truest advantage: and, on the whole, let all your praises, in order to their being acceptable, be offered *in the* prevailing *name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God even the Father*; who hath appointed him to sustain the character of the great Mediator, and is ready to receive the services we perform only in and through him.

SECT. X.

Ephes. v. 20.

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

And while you are thus careful in the duties of devotion to God, be not negligent in those which you owe to your fellow creatures; but in all the various relations in which you stand, and the respective stations in which you are placed, *be subject to each other in the fear of God*:[e] let

21

[d] *Giving thanks for all things.*] Dr. Barrow has given another important sense to these words, rendering them *for all persons*; as if the meaning were, "Consider yourselves as appointed to return to God the tribute of *praise* due "from the *whole human race*, and address "your daily thanksgivings to him for "those blessings he is continually scattering down on your *fellow-Christians* "and *fellow-creatures* in general." (See his Works Vol. I. page 237.) I have therefore in a few words hinted at this generous and noble thought, which is strongly expressed in that excellent form of general thanksgiving in the English liturgy.

[e] *Be subject to each other in the fear of God.*] The apostle offers here a *general exhortation* to the conscientious discharge of *relative duties*, from which he afterwards proceeds to the particular consideration of the several relations of husbands and wives, of parents and children, and of masters and servants; which he might rather choose to insist on, as some were ready to imagine that Christian converts were released from any farther obligations to those who still continued in a state of heathenism, and might consider the relation as dissolved between them. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 10—24, and 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.) The apostle therefore presses it upon them, in whatever station they were placed, to shew a due regard to *relative duties*, and to remember that Christian privileges did by no means excuse them from the duties resulting from *natural* and *civil* relations of life, but rather did enforce the obligation they were under to observe them. And if these duties were incumbent upon Christians towards relations of all kinds, even though they bore the character of

every one of you, whether he be a superior or an inferior, endeavour to accommodate himself to the infirmities of those that are about him in a kind and respectful manner, so that if he be a superior, he may not oppress, or if an inferior, he may not rebel. This I shall farther illustrate by descending more particularly to the duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants; upon a regular attention to which, so much of the order and comfort of society, and so much of the credit of Christianity with respect to its professors, apparently depends.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can read the exhortation which we first meet with in this short but important section, without seeing cause for the
Ver. 15 deepest humiliation on account of his own careless and inconsiderate behaviour? Alas, the wisest have their intervals of folly; and they who walk the most accurately, are not without their heedless steps. In how many instances are our thoughts dissipated, and how frequently are we quite forgetful of ourselves and our God! neither watching for opportunities of doing good, nor guarding against temptations to sin; but suffering the one to pass by us unimproved, and the other to seize us unprovided for resistance.

16 That precious time, on the right management of which eternity depends, and in the improvement of every day and hour of which, it is manifest, that at least the degree of our everlasting happiness is interested; that time which thousands on a dying-bed, or in the invisible state, would gladly redeem at the price of the whole world; how little do we think of the value of it, and to what trifles are we daily sacrificing it! Yea, to what trifles do we not sacrifice it! In the several divisions of it, when we come seriously to reflect on the morning,—the forenoon,—the afternoon,—and the evening,— how remiss are we in the proper business of each! So that if the *great business* for which we
17 were sent into the world, to *understand what is the will of the Lord*, and to act according to it, be not, as there is reason to conclude in many instances it is, *entirely neglected*, it is performed in a manner *shamefully remiss* and indifferent.

18 If we are not drunk with wine, in which there is an excess, (from which, to the shame of Christianity, the followers of Ma-

unbelievers, much more were they engaged to practise them towards such as were related to them, not only by the ties of natural or of civil institution, but by the more endearing bonds of grace.

homet totally abstain with resolute self-denial, far more easily than Christians keep themselves within the limits of sober temperance,) yet how frequently are we quite intoxicated with pleasure, in which we forget the dignity of our nature, and the rules of our profession! And how seldom are we breathing after that quickening Spirit which alone can effectually remedy these disorders! SECT. X.

If our voices are employed in singing the praises of God in our public assemblies (where, nevertheless, so many are constantly silent,) or if we practise it in our families, how little are our hearts engaged!—How seldom doth God receive any cheerful sacrifice of praise from us, even in our most prosperous circumstances? And how much less in every thing!—Where is the person that can say, "*In the night is my song unto thee?* "amidst the darkness and distress of *affliction* I still praise thee, "*though* thou correctest me, yea *because* thou correctest me "with such paternal wisdom and love?" Ver. 19. 20

And, to conclude these melancholy reflections, How little subjection is there to each other in the various relations of human life! and where there is any of it, how much more frequently doth it proceed from other considerations than from the fear of God, and a religious regard to his injunctions! Yet these that have been mentioned are commands established by a Divine authority; and there is not a Christian in any age, country, or station, who is not by his profession solemnly obliged to observe them. 21

What shall we say then on the whole, but this? *We lie down in our shame, and confusion covers us, because we have sinned against the Lord our God;* (Jer. iii. 25.) And what counsel can be given to remedy these things, but this! *If any man lack wisdom,* of which these are some of the most important precepts, *let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth none* with those instances of former folly which they sincerely lament, and which they labour to amend. (James i. 5.)

SECT. XI.

The apostle recommends it to husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ's love to the church, and presses upon wives the correspondent duty of conjugal subjection. Eph. V. 22, *to the end.*

EPHES. V. 22.

WIVES, submit

EPHESIANS V. 22.

I HAVE been recommending to you a mutual subjection to each other in the several relations of life, as a general precept of that holy

SECT. XI.

religion in which you are instructed by the gospel; and I shall now proceed to illustrate it by descending to some particulars. And, to begin with the relation between husbands and wives, I would first exhort you that are *wives*,[a] that ye *be subject* with all humility and gentleness of submission *unto your own husbands*, not only from a principle of love and respect to them, but *as* a proof of your fidelity and regard *unto the Lord*, who has seen fit to place you in a state of subordination, and commanded you to be under obedience: (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) *For the husband is* by Divine constitution *the head of the wife*, and so is invested with the superior character, *even as* the Lord Jesus *Christ is the Head of the church*, which is committed to his care and government: *and*, standing in this near relation to it, *he* has shewn the greatest concern and affection for it, and *is* become *the Saviour of the body*, employing his authority for the most important and benevolent purposes, not only to deliver us from evil, but to supply us with all good, in such a manner as to make it manifest that our salvation and happiness depend upon our union with him and subjection to him. And this may hint at the kind purposes to which the superiority of the husband over the wife should be improved, in manifesting a concern for the defence and safety, and for the benefit and comfort of the wife: but I now mention it in the former view, and *therefore as the church is subject unto Christ*, and with a cheerful willingness submit to his authority, *so also* [*let*] *wives* [*be*] subject *to their own husbands in every thing* in which their commands are not inconsistent with those of Christ, who is the Head of both.

Ephes. V. 22.

yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Yet far be it from me to insinuate any thing that should encourage tyranny and usurpation in

25 Husbands, love

[a] *I would first exhort you that are wives.*] It is observable, that in the several exhortations given here to the practice of *relative duties*, (as likewise in Col. iii. 18, to the end, and iv. 1,) the apostle first begins with the lower relations of *wives*, and *children*, and *servants*, before he proceeds in each of those instances to those of *husbands*, and *parents*, and *masters*; which it is probable he might do, because the duties of inferiors are commonly most apt to be objected to, as what are thought most difficult to be complied with; and where these are well and faithfully performed, the correspondent duties of superiors will be more readily attended to, and more effectually secured.

your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

the husband; that equitably kind and generous Lord, who ought to be considered as a perfect model, hath by his own example taught a very different lesson. And therefore, on the other hand, I would exhort you that are *husbands*, that ye be sure to *love your wives* with constant tenderness and fidelity, *even as Christ also hath loved the church*; and O how astonishing is that love, and how delightful is it to reflect upon it! For such is the affectionate regard that he hath manifested to the church, that he hath been pleased, when it was in a state of slavery and misery, to purchase it to himself at the most expensive price, *and hath* even *given himself* as a ransom *for it; That*, having paid the price of its redemption by his blood, *he might sanctify* it by his Spirit, *and cleanse it with the washing of water* in baptism, and so having purged it from the guilt and pollution of sin, might form it for himself, and train it up in the exercise of every grace, *by the* discipline of his *word*:[b] *That*, being thus purified, educated, and adorned, as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband, (Rev. xxi. 2.) *he might* in due time receive it up to glory, and *place it in his* own immediate *presence, a glorious church*, arrayed in perfect righteousness, and free from all remains of sin, *not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature*[c] which could be called a blemish; *but that* in every part and member of it *it should be holy and without blame*, and he might thus survey it completely pure, beautiful, and resplendent, in that great day, when the whole number of his elect shall be gathered together, and the

SECT. XI.

Ephes. V. 25.

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word,

26

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

27

[b] *With the washing of water by the word.*] I apprehend here is an allusion to the methods taken in eastern countries to purify the virgins that were to be presented to the royal embrace: (compare Esth. ii. 3, 9, 12; and Ezek. xvi. 7—14.) And no doubt proper care was also taken to *cultivate their minds*, and form them to such knowledge as might render them more fit to become the dignity intended for them; which was the more necessary as some of those who appeared as candidates on such occasions were of low birth and education.

[c] *Not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing of that nature.*] How bright an idea does this give us of the grand plan and design of Christianity, to bring all the *millions* of which the *church* consists, to such a state of *perfect virtue* and *glory*, that when the penetrating eye of Christ, its great and holy *Bridegroom*, shall survey it, there shall not be one *spot* or *wrinkle*, or *any thing like it*, in the least to impair its beauty, or offend his sight! Where is such a scheme or thought to be found in the world, but in the New Testament, and those who have been taught by it?

SECT. XI.

marriage of the lamb shall be celebrated amidst the acclamations of the heavenly legions, to whose blissful world his bride shall be conducted in triumph.

Ephes. V. 27.

28 But to return to the subject from which this pleasing digression hath led me: such is the nearness of the relation I am speaking of, that *husbands ought so to love their wives as* they love *their own bodies*: and when we consider that the bond of marriage makes them both one, and remember what an inseparable community of interests it establishes, we may truly say, That *he that loveth his wife loveth himself*, and he that permits his affections to be alienated from her, knows little of his own true happiness. And this must surely have its weight with every considerate person: *for no man* in his senses *ever yet hated his own flesh*, whatever its infirmities, or imperfections were, *but nourisheth and cherisheth it*, providing not only for the sustenance of it, but for its comfortable accommodation; *even as the Lord* nourisheth and cherisheth *the church*, supplying it with all things that may conduce to its welfare and happiness, with a tender concern for its infirmities, looking upon it as one with himself: *For* it is a most certain, as well as delightful truth, that he regards it in this view, and that *we are* esteemed by him as *members of his body*, united to him by one spirit, and therefore considered like Eve, when just taken out of Adam's side, (Gen. ii. 23.) as making a part *of his flesh, and of his bones*; whom therefore he would no more permit to be separated from him, than a man would be willing to lose a vital part of himself. Now *answerably to this*,[d] it is undoubtedly fit, that (as Adam was divinely inspired to declare[e] on the first view of that delightful relation of which I now speak,) all other ties should yield to this; so that, according as it follows there, (Gen. ii. 24.) "*A man shall leave his father and mother*,

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined

[d] *Answerably to this.*] This is the exact import of the phrase ἀντὶ τούτου which might also be rendered [*on the other hand.*] that is, taking the matter in a different but corresponding view.

[e] Adam was divinely inspired to declare.] See note [d] on Mat. xix. 5, Vol. II. p. 218, as to the reason there is to conclude that Adam spake this in consequence of some extraordinary *Divine illumination.*

unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

" *and be* inseparably *joined to his wife, and they,* " though originally and naturally *two* persons, " *shall* for the future *be one flesh*; shall be con- " sidered as one person, and, as it were, one " soul in two bodies."

SECT. XI.

Ephes. V. 31.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

This is indeed *a great mystery,*[f] which was long unknown, and now it is in some measure discovered, is a matter of much admiration; *but* you will easily perceive, that in saying this, *I speak* not of the union between a man and his wife, but *of* that between *Christ and the church:* for that the Son of God should unite himself to a society of mortal men, and regard them as making a part of himself, on account of the intimacy with which they are joined to him in a community of Spirit and of interest, can indeed never be sufficiently admired. *Nevertheless,* you will not, I hope, forget the occasion which led me to touch upon this pleasing subject: I therefore renew the exhortation, and say, *Let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself,* with such a cordial and sincere affection as he bears to himself; *and* let *the wife* [*see*] *that she reverence* [*her*] *husband,* and be subject to him, not only as a necessary duty, but as led to it by affectionate choice, regarding him with inward respect and esteem, as well as paying him the honour of external obedience.

32

33 Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular, so love his wife even as himself; and the wife *see* that she reverence *her* husband.

33

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the love of our blessed Redeemer to his church be daily celebrated with the most cordial gratitude, and that infinite condescension adored, by which he hath been pleased to *unite*

[f] *This is a great mystery.*] Dr. Whitby thinks this refers to a tradition among the Jews, that the marriage of Adam with Eve was a type of the union between the Messiah and the *church*; and several remarkable passages of that kind have been produced.—Bishop Burnet interprets this expression, as if it were designed to signify, that this was *a mystical argument* of the main point the apostle was intent upon proving, that is, the *union* of the Jews and Gentiles in one church, since otherwise Christ being espoused to each might seem in a state of polygamy. (See Burnet on the Articles, p. 264.) But this conceit is so far fetched, and the interpretation given in the paraphrase is so easy, that one would wonder so many difficulties should be raised on so obvious a point. The *mystery* certainly was, that the eternal *Son of God*, receiving the degenerate race of man into an *union with himself*, should have *loved* them with an affection *exceeding* that which is to be found among the most intimate *human relations*. This sublime doctrine had long been concealed, and cannot now be perfectly comprehended; and therefore may with the greatest propriety be called *a mystery* in every sense of the word.

SECT. XI. *us to himself* in such dear and inseparable bonds. *He is the Saviour of the body;* and O, in how wonderful a manner is he become so! *He hath given himself for us,* hath brought us
Ver. 8. from servitude and misery at the expence of his own life, and
23 hath *washed us from our sins in his own blood,* as well as *cleansed*
25 *us* in the laver of *baptismal water;* and intending us for the
26 eternal displays of his love, as well as for the participation of his glory, he hath sanctified us by his Spirit, and formed us for it by his word; and thus is preparing us for that blessed day, when the whole body of his elect shall be brought forth, as the bride the Lamb's wife, to those public espousals, which shall have
27 their consummation in complete and everlasting happiness. O what a noble and illustrious day! when the eye of Christ shall survey all the millions of his people, and placing them in his presence as one with himself, shall look with full complacency and delight on all the various members of that glorious church, and behold neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but all comely, fair and lovely, all answering that perfect idea which he had formed, and that scheme which he had laid for raising them by perfect holiness to perfect felicity.—In the mean time, let us think with delight on the proofs that he gives of his con-
29 stant love. He nourishes and cherishes his church; and with the most affectionate regard is tender of it, as we are of the
30 members of our own body, of our flesh, and of our bones. O that we may have a more sensible communion with him as our great Head, and may derive more continual influences from him!

For his sake let us love one another: and let those who are joined in the conjugal relation often consider it in the view in
32 which it is here represented. Let husbands see to it, that their love to their wives bear some resemblance to that which Christ
33 avows to the church: let wives pay a reverence to their husbands,
24 like that which the church is to pay to Christ: and let both take care to maintain that wisdom and sanctity in the whole of their behaviour, which may suit the relation which they bear to each other in their common Head, as well as render their intimate alliance happy, which it can never be but by an union of hearts as well as of hands.—Vain will it be to think of dividing their interests when their persons are thus joined in such a manner as
31 to become one flesh. And can there be a stronger argument to the most tender love! He that loveth his wife, loveth himself:
28 she that loveth her husband, and from love obeys him, loveth herself too: and every instance of unkindness on the one hand, or the other, is but arming the members with weapons against the head, or employing the head in contrivances against the members.

SECT. XII.

The apostle urges the mutual duties of children and parents, and of servants and masters, enforcing each of them with proper arguments. Eph. VI. 1—9

EPHESIANS VI. 1.

EPHES. VI. 1. CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

HAVING spoken of the relative duties of husbands and wives, I now proceed to mention other relations arising from them, and particularly that between parents and children. And here I would exhort you that are *children*, that with becoming duty and respect ye *obey your parents*, attending to the instructions of your father, and not forsaking the law of your mother (Prov. i. 8); out of regard to the subjection that you owe them *in the Lord*, and in compliance with the authority of Christ: *for this is right* and reasonable in itself, as a just debt to those who are the instruments of your being, and to whose care and kindness you are so much obliged; and will be also beneficial in its consequences, as it is certain that parents in general are more capable of directing their children than they are of governing themselves. And as it is proper and expedient in itself, so it was also expressly commanded by God in that short summary of moral precepts which he uttered on mount Sinai, and engraved with his own finger on the tables of stone, where you know it was said, *Honour thy father and* [*thy*] *mother*, enjoining you to regard them as your superiors with all duty and obedience, and cheerfully to afford them relief and maintenance if they should stand in need of it; *which*, by the way you may observe, *is the first commandment* that is attended *with* a special *promise*[a]: For it is added there,

SECT. XII. Ephes. VI. 1.

2 Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise,)

[a] *Which is the first commandment with promise.*] The church of Rome would from hence argue, that *the second commandment*, which forbids the worship of *images*, having a promise added to it of God's *shewing mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments*, can be no longer obligatory under the gospel, since *this*, which relates to *honouring parents* is said to be *the first commandment with promise*. But it is easy to discern the fallacy and weakness of this argument, as what is annexed to *the second commandment* apparently relates to the whole law, and is *a general declaration* of the mercy God would shew to those who kept not only *that*, but all his commandments; while *this*, of which the apostle

SECT. XII.

Ephes. VI. 3.

that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth[b]; which words express the peculiar care of the Divine Providence for the continuance and comfort of the lives of those who should observe this precept, the benefit of which those children might generally expect, who were dutiful to their parents: and though under the gospel the promise of temporal blessings be not so express and peremptory, yet even now it may be cheerfully expected that God will bless such children in a very visible manner; and he assuredly will do it, so far as temporal prosperity may on the whole be subservient to their truest and highest interest.

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 *And*, on the other hand, ye parents, and more especially, *ye fathers*, let me beseech you, that ye *provoke not your children* by a rigorous severity, and be particularly careful not to exasperate their angry passions by an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour, lest by this means you should excite them to such a secret indignation, as may make it difficult for them *to* restrain those expressions of *wrath* which in such a relation would be very indecent; and, among other ill consequences of such a conduct, there is great reason also to conclude, that it would naturally prejudice them against Christianity, and thus would bring upon yourselves a share in the guilt of their disobedience and their ruin; *but*, on the contrary, let me exhort you to *educate them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*[c], under

4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

speaks is really *the first* and only precept of the decalogue that has a *particular promise* annexed to it, peculiar to itself.

[b] *That thou mayest be long-lived upon the earth.*] It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that the apostle does not say,—*upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, that he might not encourage a vain hope in the Jews, of continuing in the land of Canaan. But when it is considered, that those to whom he was writing were chiefly Gentile converts, the clause would very properly be omitted in this view, as it might better suit the case of the whole church to express the promise in a general way.

[c] *In the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*] By the word παιδεια, which we render *nurture*, as distinguished from νουθεσια Κυριου, *the admonition of the Lord*, some think may be intended such a *knowledge* of books, men, and things, as may fit them to appear in life with honour and usefulness. But as they stand connected, and the word Κυριος may refer to both, it seems more reasonable to explain these terms of such a course of *discipline and instruction* as properly belongs to a *religious education*, which ought to be employed in forming them for *the Lord*, by laying a restraint upon the first appearances of every vicious passion, and *nourishing them up in the words of faith and of good doctrine* (1 Tim. iv. 6), in which respect, I cannot but take this occasion to say, catechising has been found to be of excellent use, though it be now so much neglected.

such discipline and instruction as may lead them to the knowledge of the religion of Christ, and most effectually dispose them to profess and practise it; which it is certainly of great importance that you should attend to in their earliest years, and before ill habits render them stubborn and intractable. SECT. XII. Ephes. VI. 5

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ:

There is yet another relation between masters and servants, concerning which I shall proceed to advise you: and as I would not neglect those of the lowest character in life, on whose conduct much of the credit of religion may depend; I would exhort you therefore who are *servants*, whether of the meanest rank, such as bondmen and slaves, or in the station only of hired servants, that ye *be subject* and obedient *to* those who are [*your*] *masters* and proprietors, though they be only so *according to the flesh*; while there is still a superior Lord of your spirits, whose authority is to set bounds to theirs, and never must in any case be violated to please them, or even to preserve your own lives, when most in their power: but in all lawful things whatever, see that you maintain a becoming subjection to them, performing what they order you *with fear and trembling*, as those who would be cautious of giving offence, or of bringing a reproach on your profession, by any unfaithfulness or negligence in their affairs; discharging your duty to them *in the simplicity* and uprightness *of your heart, as unto Christ*, with that sincerity and uniformity of conduct which a regard to Christ will require and produce: Acting in all things, *not with eye-service* only, without attending to their business any farther than while their eye is upon you, *as* if it were your only aim to be *men-pleasers*[b], and to secure the favour of your masters; *but as* those who are *the servants of Christ* by your Christian profession,

6 Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ,

[b] *Not with eye-service as men-pleasers.*] Grotius takes notice of the elegance of the *compound words* made use of here in the *original* (μη κατ' οφθαλμοδουλειαν ως ανθρωποαρεσκοι), which our translators have endeavoured to imitate: but as the Greek abounds more in such compound words than any other language, so the apostle Paul has frequently introduced them in his writings with a peculiar elegance and beauty, of which it is apparent that the best translations must in many instances fall very short. Compare Rom. ii. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Col. ii. 4; 1 Tim. i. 6; 2 Tim. i. 6; ii. 15, Gr. and see Blackwall's Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 229.

SECT. XII. Ephes. VI. 7.

and required by him to serve your masters with fidelity, *doing the will of God from the soul*, with a sincere desire above all things of approving yourselves to his all-seeing eye. And thus let it appear that you make conscience of your duty, and apply to it with a willing mind; performing all the business of your station *with* a cheerful readiness and *good-will*, and *doing service* with a benevolent alacrity, in such a manner as to shew that you respect and love your masters, and have their interest at heart, *as* being ultimately influenced by a view *to* the approbation and honour of *the Lord*, *and not* by regard *to* those tokens of favour you may receive from *men*: *Knowing* assuredly, and making it the governing maxim of your lives, *that whatsoever good any man doeth*, in one station of life or another, *he shall receive* a proportionable, though infinitely gracious reward for *the same*, from the hand *of the Lord* as his final Judge; and this, *whether* [*he be*] *a slave or a freeman*, whether he be the meanest servant, or the greatest prince: for he is the universal Guardian and Protector of his people, and esteems men, not according to their stations in the world, but according to their behaviour in those stations, whether high or low.

doing the will of God from the heart.

7 With good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 *And*, on the other hand, *ye* that are lords and *masters*, let me exhort you, that ye *do the same to them*, and always act on the same equitable principles, not only with respect to those who are your hired servants, but even to them that are your slaves, and belong to you as your absolute property, so that according to human laws you may dispose of their persons and their lives as you please: but howsoever mean and low their station be, remember the common bond of humanity, by which you are united to them; remember the peculiar obligations of Christians to distinguished benevolence and goodness, to all with whom you have to do; and therefore govern them with moderation and gentleness of temper, *forbearing*, not only cruel and dangerous blows, but all severe and rigorous *threatening*[c],

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threaten-

[c] *Forbearing threatening.*] To explain this, as some have done, as if it only signified *remitting the evil threatened*, falls far short of the apostle's meaning, if I at all

ing: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

and every thing of an over-hasty and tyrannical conduct; and treat them in the same generous and upright manner as you would have them act towards you, as *knowing that ye yourselves also have a* superior Lord and *Master in the heavens*, whose authority over you is much greater and more absolute, than yours over any of your fellow-creatures: *and*, whatsoever difference there may be in your stations, *there is no respect of persons with him!* but he will administer the most strict and impartial justice, and shew that he remembers the cry of the oppressed, though men may consider them, on account of the inferiority of their circumstances, as below their regards.

SECT. XII. Ephes. VI. 9.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is matter of thankful acknowledgment, that God condescends in his word to give us particular instructions, suited to the circumstances in which we are respectively placed. Children and servants are not forgotten. Let them attend to those gracious lessons which are here given by the supreme Parent and Master, who while he teaches them, pleads their cause, and interposes his high authority to vindicate them from oppression and abuse.

Much of the happiness of society evidently depends on the temper and conduct of those who are placed in these lower relations. Let children therefore learn to be subject to their parents with all dutiful and humble respect, from a sense of the reasonableness of the command, and of the goodness which has annexed such a promise to it: a promise which shall still be efficacious, so far as long life would be indeed a blessing to a pious child. Ver. 1, 2, 3

Let servants, with all godly simplicity and uprightness of heart, revere the authority of Christ in them that are their masters according to the flesh; and exercise a good conscience towards them upon all occasions, not only when under their eye, but in their absence; well knowing that God is always present, and always attentive to the conduct of every rational creature in whatsoever rank. Let them cherish that inward good-will and benevolence of heart, which renders every act of service uniform and steady, and makes it in a degree obliging, even when performed by those from whom authority might have extorted it. And let the certain and important reward that will assuredly follow every good 5, 6, 7, 8

understand it; as a charge given to *forbear* all passionate and *menacing expressions* towards *servants*, is of a more extensive nature, and calls for greater generosity and mildness than *not to punish them* so severely as they before had threatened them.

SECT. XII. action, whether great or small, and whether performed by persons in more elevated or inferior stations of life, animate us all to a zealous diligence in well-doing, whatever discouragement may at present attend us.

And as to those who bear the superior relations in life, let them Verse 4 remember, that the command of a much higher parent and lord requires also of them a tender regard to their inferiors. Let parents therefore govern their own passions, that they may not terrify and oppress the tender spirits of their children; or if they are otherwise than tender, may not teach them an evil lesson against themselves, and by their own example strengthen them in those excesses which may be a disgrace and detriment to the family, and may, when age has broken all the vigour of the parents, bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. A conscientious care to educate and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if duly attended to, will teach a better conduct, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ will have an happy influence on both.

9 And, finally, let the thoughts of that great impartial Master in heaven, awe masters on earth; and the expectation, the certain expectation of giving an account to him, engage them to make the yoke of servitude, which God has been pleased to lay on those who are nevertheless their brethren, as light and easy as they can; choosing, even when they might command with authority, rather with love to entreat; not doing or saying any thing unnecessarily rigorous or severe, not threatening, reviling, or reproaching, but treating their servants as those whom they consider as partakers with them in the same hope, or whom they earnestly desire by all prudent condescension and tenderness to lead into the way of salvation.

SECT. XIII.

The apostle concludes the epistle with urging them to prepare for a strenuous combat with their spiritual enemies, by putting on the whole armour of God; and earnestly exhorting them to fervency in prayer, he recommends himself to their remembrance at the throne of grace. Eph. VI. 10, *to the end.*

EPHESIANS VI. 10.

SECT. XIII. Ephes. VI. 10. I HAVE been exhorting you to a faithful performance of relative duties, and *as to what remains, my brethren,* since every relation in life brings along with it correspondent duties, and will require vigour and resolution in the discharge of them, whatever therefore be the circumstance

EPHES. VI. 10. FINALLY, my brethren, be strong

in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

or situation you are in, let me beseech you, not to rely on your own strength, but *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, confide in his omnipotent protection, and fix your dependence on the grace he is so ready to communicate to us, to support us in every service and struggle to which we are called. And since it is a strenuous warfare in which you are engaged, *put on the complete armour of God*,[a] that glorious dress so necessary for you, and so conducive to your ornament and safety; *that ye may*, in consequence of it, *be able to stand against* all *the* subtile methods and *artifices of the devil*, against all the ambushes he may lay for you, and all the rage and fury with which he may attack you.

SECT. XIII. Ephes. VI. 10.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

11

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

12

For, in the warfare we are carrying on, *our struggle* and contention *is not with flesh and blood* alone; not merely with human adversaries, however powerful, subtle, and cruel; not only with the remaining corruptions of animal nature, which often give us such painful exercise; *but* we are called to wrestle and contend *with* sagacious and mighty spirits, once ranked among celestial *principalities*, though now degraded by their apostasy to be chiefs in hell; and *with powers*, that employ their utmost strength to ruin us, and that still keep their regular subordination, that their efforts of mischief may be more effectual: we contend *with* those who are *the rulers of the darkness of this* age and *world*,[b] who have long usurped a dominion over it, and who in the present age hold men in the chains of hereditary superstition and destructive errors, which have been delivered down to them through many

[a] *The complete armour of God.*] The word in the original is πανοπλια, which includes *all sorts of armour*, whether offensive or defensive; consisting in the exercise of all those Christian graces which we are furnished with by God, to be made use of in his strength, as well to annoy the enemy as to defend ourselves: and it appears by the particular description which the apostle here proceeds to give of it, to be *a suit of armour* every way *complete*, and properly adapted to the defence of *every part*; though, as some observe, none is provided for the back, as we must always face the enemy, or we shall presently lie open and have no defence from danger.

[b] *The rulers of the darkness of this world.*] This and the following clause Dr. Whitby explains in his paraphrase, "of those *evil* "*spirits* that *rule* in the heathen nations "which are yet in *darkness*," and "of "those that have *their stations in the re*"*gions of the air*." But I do not see any foundation for such a distinction, and therefore have not intimated it in the paraphrase.

SECT. XIII.

succeeding generations; and *with spirits*, who became authors and abettors *of wickedness* even while they abode *in heavenly* [*places*,[c]] where they rebelled against the God of heaven, and drew in multitudes, who were before holy and happy spirits, to take part with them in their ungrateful and impious revolt. With these are we struggling for that great celestial prize which they have for ever lost; and their nature, experience, and situation, gave them most formidable advantages against the weak children of men, surrounded with so many examples of evil,

Ephes. VI. 12.

against spiritual wickedness in high *places.*

13 and with such powerful temptations to it. *On this account* then let me pursue my exhortation, that ye would *take unto you the complete armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand* all these strong and malicious enemies *in the evil day* of extremest danger; *and having done all*, having exerted yourselves to the utmost, which indeed it will be absolutely necessary for you to do, ye may be found at last, when your warfare is accomplished *to stand* victorious and triumphant.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 *Stand therefore* in a constant readiness for the encounter, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, *having your loins girded about with* the strictest *truth*,[d] uprightness and sincerity of heart, which will give a steadiness and uniformity to your conduct, and serve, as a girdle does, to brace on the other parts of your armour, and

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth;

[c] *Spirits of wickedness in heavenly* [*places.*] There is somewhat peculiar in the form of the expression in the original, τα πνευματικα της πονηριας εν τοις επουρανιοις, which Mr. Locke has paraphrased, "the spiritual managers of the opposition to the "kingdom of God." There is no doubt but it refers to those revolted *wicked spirits* who are continually employed in propagating *wickedness*. But Dr. Goodwin would render the last words, εν τοις επουρανιοις, *about heavenly things*, as signifying, that we *wrestle with them* to secure to ourselves those spiritual and eternal blessings of which they would endeavour to deprive us. See his Works, Vol. I. p. 45. I have hinted at this, but cannot think it a proper translation: the connexion and version I have followed seems much more natural and easy: "They were *wicked in* "*heaven*, and by that *wickedness* fell from "thence."

[d] *Having your loins girded about with truth.*] It has often been observed, that the military girdle was not only an ornament, but a defence; as it hid the gaping joints of the armour, and kept them close and steady, as well as fortified the loins of those that wore it, and rendered them more vigorous and fit for action.—The chief difficulty here is to know, whether *truth* refers to the *true principles* of religion, or to *integrity* in our conduct; and how, on the latter interpretation to keep it distinct from the *breast-plate of righteousness*, or on the former from *the shield of faith*. But it seems probable to me, that it may rather signify some *virtue of the mind*, as all the other parts of the armour enumerated do; and then it must refer to that *uprightness* and sincerity of intention, which produces *righteousness*, or an holy and equitable conduct, as its proper fruit.

and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

keep them all in their proper places; *and putting on the breast-plate of* universal *righteousness*, or a constant regard to the practice of holiness in the sight of God, and of justice and integrity in the whole of your dealings with your fellow-creatures, which, like a breast plate, will defend your vitals against many a dangerous thrust of the enemy: *And having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,*[e] with that peaceful and benevolent temper which is so much recommended by the gospel as an essential part of the Christian character, and which, like the boots worn by soldiers, will bear you unhurt through the many difficulties and trials which, like sharp-pointed thorns, may lie in your way, and dangerously obstruct your progress. And *upon all* [*these*] *taking* to yourselves *the* impenetrable *shield of* a steady *faith* in the great promises and principles of the gospel,[f] *whereby*, if it be kept in lively exercise, *ye shall be able* effectually *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*,[g] those furious suggestions which he may sometimes discharge into the mind, like so many envenomed arrows or darts, which kindle by the

SECT. XIII.

Ephes. VI. 14

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

15

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked:

16

[e] *The preparation of the gospel of peace.*] Mr. Locke understands by this, "an habitual *readiness* to walk in the way of "the gospel of peace," as if it were intended as a *general* injunction to obey all its precepts. But to me it evidently appears to be designed in a *particular* manner to point out the *preparation* which the *gospel* makes for our defence, by that *peaceful temper* which it so often teaches and inculcates; of which, as I take it to be the sense of the place, I have explained it in the paraphrase; though others choose to understand it of that *confidence* which is inspired by the *gospel* in consequence of the *peace* it establishes between God and the soul.

[f] *Upon all* [*these*] *taking the shield of faith.*] Our translators rendet it [*above all*;] but as [*upon*] answers best to the particle ἐπι here used, so it best expresses the allusion to the situation of *the shield*, as covering the other pieces of *armour*; which has here a beautiful propriety, as *truth*, *righteousness*, and *peace*, are sheltered, (as it were) by *faith*, from the assaults which otherwise might overbear them.

[g] *To quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*] Dr. Goodwin, and many others, suppose that the apostle here refers to an ancient custom still prevailing among the Indians and other barbarous nations, to dip their *arrows* in the blood or gall of *asps* and *vipers*, or other *poisonous* preparations, which fire the blood of those who are wounded with them, occasion exquisite pain, and make the least wound mortal: and some Greek writers tell us, that it was usual for soldiers to have shields made of raw hides, which immediately quenched them. (See Goodwin's Child of Light, p. 101.)—It is also certain, that some *arrows* were discharged with so great a velocity, that they fired in their passage: but though in common cases this could seldom happen, nor would there thus be much probability of their reaching the mark, yet I have hinted at it in the paraphrase in allusion to the sudden and surprising violence of Satanical suggestions.—Missile weapons, with burning flax wrapped about them, were likewise sometimes used, (see Rupbel. ex Herod. in loc.) but this was chiefly to fire places, and not in the attack of persons alone.

CHAP. XIII.

swiftness of their passage: *And take* also *the helmet of salvation*, that cheerful hope of complete deliverance and eternal happiness, which will cover your head in the day of battle, and give you a well-grounded boldness and confidence, which will greatly conduce to your success: *and* brandish in your hands *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, those declarations of his word and gospel which his Spirit has inspired, and by a firm confidence in which you will be able, not only to defend yourselves, but to repel your adversaries.

Ephes. VI. 17.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 And, finally, to add efficacy to all these, be *continually praying*; make it a constant part of your daily work, and be frequently amidst all your labours and cares lifting up your hearts to God in holy ejaculations, joined *with all* kind of *prayer and supplication in the* fervency of your own spirits, under the influence of that Divine *Spirit* which resides in you, to quicken your hearts, and which will engage you never to rest contented in outward forms of unmeaning and hypocritical devotion; *and* as you desire it may be effectual, be still *watching thereunto with all perseverance*,[h] and importunate ardour of mind, joining to these petitions such earnest intercession *and* affectionate *supplication for all the saints*, as the principles of our religion dictate, and as may suit the relations, in which we respectively stand.

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;

19 And *particularly* let me entreat your prayers *for me*[i] your faithful minister and apostle, *that*, being loosed from my bonds, a door of *utterance may be* opened, and free liberty of expression *given to me*,[k] *that I may open my mouth with* all confidence and *boldness* in that important cause wherein I am engaged, so as *to make known* in

19 And for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make

[h] *Watching thereunto with all perseverance*.] Bishop Wilkins explains this (in his Treatise on Prayer, p. 39.) of improving *the gift of prayer* by continual exercise, and gathering up its materials for addresses to God by reading, conversation, meditation, &c.—Compare note [d] on Phil. iv. 6.

[i] *And particularly for me*.] Mr. Blackwall observes, that the particle δε sometimes signifies *particularly*, or *especially*; and he produces passages to this purpose from proper authorities. Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 145.

[k] *That utterance may be given to me*.] This may perhaps refer to some *impediment* in his speech, or other *imperfection* in the manner of his address, which might be a discouragement to Paul in his preaching, and seem to have an ill aspect on the success of it. Compare note[f] on 2 Cor. xii. 7, Vol. IV. p. 477, and note[b] on Gal. iv. 14. p. 50.

known the mystery of the gospel:

the most effectual manner *the mystery of the gospel*, by going on to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and stedfastly maintaining what I before have taught, of the Gentiles being called to all the privileges of the gospel-covenant; SECT. XIII. Ephes. VI. 19.

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

For which, through the resentment of the Jewish zealots, I am now a prisoner at Rome, where *I discharge my embassy in a chain*;[l] *that*, howsoever I may seem to be entirely in the power of my enemies, and have already suffered so much for my zeal for the truth, *I may* have further opportunity to *speak boldly therein, as I ought to speak*, in order to approve my fidelity to God, and my sincere affection to the souls of men. (Compare Col. iv. 3, 4.) 20

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, *and* how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

But I will not insist largely on my own personal concerns; for *that ye also may know the things that relate to me*, [*and*] *what I am doing* here at Rome, *Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister* and fellow-servant *in* the work of *the Lord*,[m] *shall* by my direction *fully inform you: Whom* indeed *I have sent* with this epistle *to you for this very purpose, that ye might* more particularly *know* from him *what relates to us, and that*, by the report which through the Divine goodness he will be able to make, *he may comfort your hearts* as to the grief and trouble you are under for me, and may encourage you to stedfastness in the gospel. 21

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

23 Peace *be* to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I conclude with my most affectionate and ardent prayers, that *peace* and all prosperity in soul and body may [*be*] *with* all *the brethren* that are with you; *and* that the *love* of God in Christ, attended with a fervent love to one another, may be shed abroad in your hearts, together *with* a plentiful increase and confirmation of *faith* and every other grace *from God the Fa-* 23

[l] *I discharge my embassy in a chain.*] Some would render πεπρέσβευω ἐν ἁλύσει, *I grow old in a chain*, (compare Philem. ver. 9. where Παῦλος πρεσβύτης signifies *Paul the aged*;) but it is certain, that the common version of this passage may be justified.—Few need to be told, that it was usual among the Romans to chain the prisoner's right-arm to the left-arm of the soldier that guarded him; but as the persons of ambassadors were always sacred, the apostle seems to refer to the outrage that was done to his Divine Master in this violation of his liberty.

[m] *Tychicus, a beloved brother*, &c.] He was one of Paul's friends and fellow-labourers, and had been his companion in the last interview he had with the elders of Ephesus, when he sent for them to come to him at Miletus. See Acts xx. 4, 17, and note [g] on ver. 4, Vol. III. p. 296.

SECT. XIII. *ther, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.* And may this *grace*, with all the blessed fruits of it, not only [*be*] *with* you, but may it richly abound to *all* in every place *that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity* and incorruption of heart,* that are inspired with a true affection to him, and from that love desire faithfully to serve him. *Amen.*

Ephes. VI. 24.

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the heart of every Christian soldier be at once awakened, and animated, by the important charge which the apostle here is (as it were) still sounding in our ears. He knew the weakness of the Christian, and the dangers of his way; how insufficient for the spiritual warfare we are in ourselves, and that our only
Ver. 10. *strength* is *in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, by whom alone we can be kept in safety, and may be made even *more than conquerors in all things:* and therefore pointing us to this, at the same time that he sets forth the difficulty of the combat, and sounds a charge to the battle, he shows us the provision
11, 12 made for our defence, and calls us to put on the complete armour of God; an armour that will serve for every part, that will supply us both with offensive and defensive weapons, and help us to withstand, and even to surmount, the greatest opposition. Let us see to it then that we put on, and that we use it all.

And have we not enough to engage us to it, when we consider that our enemies are great and many, that they are restless and unwearied in their malice, and that their subtilty is inconceiv-
12 able? Flesh and blood hath too frequently worsted us: how then shall we stand against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spirits of wickedness, who make it still their business to draw others into that spiritual wickedness which they were first so daring as to shew in heavenly places? It will be impossible we should at any time be safe from danger, if every direction here given be not diligently attended to; and having such a numerous and mighty host of enemies combined against us, we never shall be able to withstand and
14 overcome them, if the girdle of truth be loosened, if the breast-

* *That love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*] Mr. Locke explains the word ἀφθαρσία, of such a *love* as would prevent men's *mixing* any thing with the gospel which was not genuine, and might render it ineffectual. (Compare Gal. v. 2, 4.) But it seems rather to express that *uprightness of heart* which is opposed to putting on false pretences; and may with great propriety be understood as a general description of a true Christian. And it is manifest indeed, that wheresoever this *unfeigned love to Christ* prevails, there will of course be all the other essential parts of the Christian character.

plate of righteousness, be not put on, if the preparation of the gospel of peace do not secure our steps, if the helmet of salvation do not guard our head, if the shield of faith be not our shelter, and the sword of the Spirit our weapon. And vainly shall we labour to obtain this armour by any other method, if fervent prayer and supplication in the Spirit, under the aids and influences of his grace, be not addressed to the God of heaven, whose work and whose gift this celestial armour is: so that if ever we would have it, and would use it right, let us persist in seeking it with holy importunity and perseverance, and the desired answer shall not always be denied. SECT. XIII. Verse 17 18

To conclude, Let us often think of the apostle Paul, as discharging his embassy in a chain, that we may learn to submit to whatever affronts and injuries, whatever hardships and sufferings, we may be called to endure on the account of religion; concerned about nothing so much as that we may approve our fidelity in the sight of God, and loving the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, may be partakers of the blessings of his grace, with all that have a true affection to him. All that appear to be of such a character, let us ever most affectionately love, whatever their particular sentiments or forms of worship may be; and a share of this mercy and favour, with all the blessed fruits of peace and prosperity, of love and faith, shall be infallibly our own, and be communicated in a rich abundance to us from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. 20 23, 24

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

PHILIPPIANS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

THE Christian religion was first planted at Philippi by the apostle Paul, about the year of our Lord 51: who, having (as the history of the Acts informs us, chap. xvi.) made a progress through Galatia and Phrygia, and intending to pursue his tour through Bithynia, was admonished in a vision to go over to Macedonia. And being arrived at Philippi, which was a city in the first part of that province, and a Roman colony (see vol. III. § 36, note *g* and *h*, p. 236), he, with his companions, Timothy, Luke, and Silas, spent some days there in preaching the gospel. During his stay here, he converted Lydia, and cast out a spirit of divination from a damsel; which so enraged her masters, who made a considerable advantage of it, that they stirred up the inhabitants, and threw Paul and Silas into prison: from whence however they were miraculously delivered, and the jailor with all his house converted to the Christian faith. Though the apostle soon after left the city, Luke and Timothy continued there some time longer, to carry on the work he had so successfully begun: and this no doubt was one reason that induced him to fix upon the latter, as the most proper person to visit the Philippians in his absence, of whose affection for them, and concern for their interests, he takes particular notice, (chap. ii. 19—22.)

That the apostle himself made these Christians a second visit, is plain from Acts xx. 6, though we are not informed of any particulars relating to it; and it is at least highly probable, (for reasons to be given below), that he saw them again after this epistle was sent: indeed the peculiar affection and respect they seem to have discovered for the apostle, as well as the sufferings to which they had been exposed, by their faithful adherence to the gospel, (chap. i. 28—30.) entitled them to some distinguished regard; for, besides the present he acknowledges to have received from them by the hands of Epaphroditus (chap. iv. 18), they had more than once before generously contributed to his support, even during his residence amongst larger and richer societies, (ib. v. 15, 16.) And from some hints that are dropt in this epistle, we may gather, that they had taken an opportunity of expressing, in the strongest and most affectionate terms, their sympathy with the apostle under his confinement, and their concern lest it should affect the interest of religion, and prevent the spread of the gospel. It is no wonder if such proofs of the sincerest friendship, and the discovery of so excellent a temper, should deeply affect so pious and benevolent a heart as St. Paul's; and accordingly his epistle breathes throughout, the warmest gratitude and most disinterested affection.

As to the date of this epistle, it appears from the apostle's own words (chap. i. 7, 13; iv. 22), that it was wrote while he was a prisoner at Rome; and, from the expectation he discovers (chap. ii. 24), of being shortly released and restored to them again, compared with Philem. ver. 22, and Heb. xiii. 23, where he expresses a like expectation in yet stronger terms, it is extremely probable that this epistle was wrote towards the close of his first imprisonment, and sent about the same time with the Epistles to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and Philemon, which (as has been already shewn in the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 89.) was in the year of our Lord 63, and the 9th of the Emperor Nero. (See also Vol. III. § 60, note g, p. 401.)

The apostle's design in this epistle (which is quite of

the practical kind,) seems to be, "to comfort the Philippians, under the concern they had expressed at "the news of his imprisonment; to check a party spirit that appears to have broke out among them, and "to promote, on the contrary, an entire union and "harmony of affection; to guard them against being "seduced from the purity of the Christian faith, by "*Judaizing teachers*; to support them under the trials "with which they struggled; and, above all, to inspire "them with a concern to adorn their profession, by "the most eminent attainments in the divine life."

The apostle, after his usual salutation (in which he joins Timothy's name with his own,) begins with assuring the Philippians, in the most expressive language, of his affectionate regard for them, and solicitous concern for their religious interests; acknowledging, with the utmost gratitude, the goodness of God in calling them to partake with him in the blessings of the gospel, and praying for their farther improvement in knowledge and holiness; chap. i. 1—11. And, to remove the apprehensions they were under from the news of his imprisonment at Rome, which seemed to wear so fatal an aspect on the interest of religion, he informs them, that even this event had, under the direction of Providence, been over-ruled for the service of the gospel; while the honest zeal of some, and the envious, contentious spirit of others, both concurred in advancing the same cause: and, notwithstanding all the opposition that was made to him, he declares his cheerful hope and confidence, that in every situation of life, and even in death itself, he should be still honoured as the instrument of promoting this great object of his wishes; ver. 12—20. In this connection it was natural for him to express the strong desire he felt of being with Christ in that better world, where he should receive the blessed fruits of his labours: and, after describing the struggle he found within himself, between his earnest longing after that felicity, and his solicitude for their farther establishment in religion, he declares his readiness to continue here for the service of his Master, and their spiritual

advantage; and entreats them, that, while he did so, he might have the joy to hear that, though he was absent, they maintained the honour of their Christian character, both for piety and courage; ver. 21—30.

The apostle, having given the Philippians these general admonitions to maintain a conduct worthy of the gospel, proceeds to exhort them, in the most solemn and pathetic manner, to the particular exercises of unanimity and candour, and a tender care for the interests of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer; on whose humiliation and exalted state he expatiates with great warmth and energy, urging them to a due improvement of these sublime discoveries by a holy caution and circumspection in their whole deportment, and a life of the most exemplary virtue; which, as it would most evidently conduce to their own happiness, and the honour of their religion, would also make a glorious addition to his joy and triumph at the great day, by affording so convincing a proof of the success of his labours; chap. ii. 1—16. And, as a farther instance of the strength of his affection and concern for their happiness, he assures them, that he should even rejoice in the view of sacrificing his life for their advantage: and since, for the present, his circumstances would not allow him to gratify the earnest desire he felt of administering personal consolation and instruction to them, he promises to send Timothy very soon to supply his place; who, on account of the particular affection he had discovered for that church, and the assiduity with which he assisted the apostle in his first preaching the gospel there, was of all others the most proper to be employed in such an office. Yet he intimates a strong persuasion, that he should himself be soon released from his imprisonment, and have the pleasure of seeing them once again: however, as they stood in need of present support, and Timothy could not immediately undertake the journey, he tells them he had commissioned Epaphroditus, by whom he sent this letter, to assure them of his kind remembrance; and to induce them to pay the greater re-

gard to his messenger, he gives an affecting account of his late sickness, and ardent love to the brethren; ver. 17, to the end.

Having thus sufficiently testified the sincerity of his regards for them, the apostle goes on to guard them against the influence of some factious, turbulent persons, who had disturbed the peace of the church by their furious zeal for the observance of the Jewish ritual; and exhorts them in opposition to all such pretences, to fix their whole dependence on Christ and his gospel; which he assures them he himself had done, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages than most of those who valued themselves so highly upon them; animating them, from his own example, continually to aspire after higher attainments in piety and virtue, as the only means of securing that complete felicity which the gospel promises to all its sincere votaries; chap. iii. 1—14. And as they had not yet attained to the perfection of the Christian character, he urges upon them, from the glorious hope of the resurrection, a holy and blameless temper, and heavenly conversation; cautioning them against the bad example even of some professing Christians, who brought destruction on themselves, and reproach on religion, by the unsuitable manner in which they acted, ver. 15, to the end; iv. 1.

The apostle, having in the former part of the epistle recommended mutual forbearance, peace, and concord, now descends to some particular charges relating to the same subject; and then proceeds to give more general exhortations to Christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable and praiseworthy, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to set before them; ver. 2—9.

Towards the close of the epistle, he makes his acknowledgments to the Philippians for the seasonable and liberal supply they had sent him; which he declares he rejoiced in principally on their account, as it was so convincing a proof of their affection for him, and their concern for the support of the gospel, which

he preferred far above any private secular interest of his own; expressly disclaiming all selfish, mercenary views, and assuring them, with a noble simplicity, that he was able upon all occasions to accommodate his temper to his circumstances, and had learnt under the teachings of Divine grace, in whatever station Providence might see fit to place him, therewith to be content. After which, the apostle, having encouraged them to expect a rich supply of all their wants from their God and Father, to whom he devoutly ascribes the honour of all, concludes with salutations from himself and his friends at Rome to the whole church, and a solemn benediction; ver. 10, to the end.

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

SECT. I.

The introduction with the general salutation, suited to the views with which the apostle wrote. Phil. I. 1—11.

PHIL. I. 1.

PAUL and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which

PHILIPPIANS I. 1.

SECT. I. Phil. I. 1

PAUL and Timothy,[a] being now providentially together at Rome, both through Divine grace *the* faithful *servants of Jesus Christ,*[b] and desirous to promote his interest by their writings, where their other labours cannot reach, do hereby send their most affectionate Christian salutations *to all the saints,* their holy brethren, *in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi,* whom

[a] *Paul and Timothy.*] Paul might here choose to join Timothy with him, as he not only had attended the apostle in his general travels into these parts, but had assisted in preaching the gospel at Philippi. Compare Acts xvi. 1, 3, 12.

[b] *The servants of Jesus Christ.*] Some have inquired why Paul does not style himself *an apostle* here, and in his two epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to Philemon, as he does in all the other epistles that bear his name; and have accounted for it, by observing, that no objection had been made to his character at Thessalonica or Philippi; and that having received a *present* from them, he might not seem to be *burdensome* as an *apostle of Christ.* Perhaps it rather was because Timothy or Silas, who were neither of them *apostles,* are joined with him here, and in the epistles to the Thessalonians. But I think the question seems to have its foundation in curiosity rather than use. See Pierce in loc.

SECT. I. Phil. I. 1.

God hath united to them in the bonds of one common faith. And they greet *with* particular respect *the bishops and deacons* of the society,[c] to whom the oversight of it in the Lord is so peculiarly committed; wishing abundant success to their labours in their respective and important offices; and wishing to every private Christian under their care, whether personally known or unknown, *grace* even *to you* all, *and* perpetual *peace*, with every attendant blessing *from God*, who is now become *our* covenant-God and reconciled *Father*, *and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whose blood, righteousness, and intercession, we are brought into so happy a relation to him.

are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 When I Paul am addressing a church dear to me by so many bonds, and to whom I am under so many distinguished obligations, it is fit I should assure you, that *I give thanks unto my God*, for such he is, and I recollect it with unspeakable delight *in every mention of you*; whether before the throne of grace, or when conversing with my fellow-Christians. And the former occasion of mentioning you often occurs: for I am *always in every prayer of mine making* humble *supplication for you all*, and mingling those intercessions *with joy* and praise, when I reflect on that honourable profession which you make, and that steady and exemplary conduct by which you support and adorn it.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 (Always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy,)

5 Yes, my brethren, though several years are since passed, I think myself obliged to bless God, with all the united powers of my soul, *for your participation in* the blessings of *the gospel*,[d] *from*

5 For your fellowship in the gospel

[c] *The bishops and deacons.*] As this proves there must have been more than *one bishop* at Philippi, it has been apprehended, by many pious and learned men, to be an intimation that there were then no difference between bishops and presbyters; all the presbyters of this church having (as they suppose) the title given them here of bishops, overseers, or superintendants; for this is what the word ἐπισκοπος beyond all controversy imports. Dr. Whitby (in his note on this place) solidly asserts this interpretation, and confutes what others would give the words a contrary, and, I think, a very unnatural turn. Some think the deacons are mentioned as having been particularly concerned in the liberal supply that was sent from this church to the apostle, which had been probably collected by them.

[d] *Participation in the gospel.*] Some by κοινωνια εις το ευαγγελιον understand their *communicating something for the support of the gospel*, and particularly to the supply of the apostle's necessities, referred to chap. iv. 16, and 2 Cor. xi. 9; but to *partake*, and to *communicate*, are words of different signification, and it is evident that the

SECT. I. Phil. I. 5.

from the first day until now:

the first day of my preaching it among you, though soon attended with menaces and insults, scourging and imprisonment; and to praise him for that establishment and increase which he hath been pleased to give to the seed that was sown, and which his grace maintains even *until now*.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

6 And he will still maintain it, for [*I am*] *confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in* and upon *you*, and which I have now the pleasure of seeing so far advanced, will not finally forsake the production of his own grace, but *will finish* [*it*] in your souls, *until* he raise it to full perfection, in *the day of Jesus Christ*, when he shall appear in all his glory.

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

7 Such are the sentiments of my heart with respect to you, and such the concern I have upon your account; *as it is* indeed *just in me to be thus affected towards you all, because* I know *you have me in your hearts, both in* these *my bonds* for the sake of Christ, *and in* my *defence and confirmation of the gospel*, while I am pleading its cause in the midst of so much opposition and danger: *as you are all partakers with me in the grace* of that gospel,* which establishes a community of interests between us; and, as you so tenderly and faithfully shew your sense of it, I cannot but return it. Thus I say it ought to be, and thus it is, *for God* who discerns all the secret recesses of my heart, *is my witness, how earnestly I long for you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ*. He knows that I long to see you, with that peculiar tenderness of affection which nothing but these bonds of mutual faith and love, centering in him, can be capable of producing, and which greatly resembles the compassion which Christ himself feels for those whom his grace has made the members of his body.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray,

9 *And*, in the mean time, *this I* continue to *pray* for in your behalf, as the best blessing I can

original word generally signifies the former rather than the latter. Compare 1 Cor. i. 9; 2 Cor. viii. 4: xiii. 13; Phil. iii. 10; Philem. ver. 6; 1 John i. 3, 6, 7.

* *As you are all partakers with me.*] Perhaps the grammar of this sentence would have been better expressed, if I had rendered it pretty agreeable to what Dr. Whitby would propose, "*You who are all "partakers of grace with me in my bonds, "for the defence and confirmation of the "gospel.*" But the sense is nearly the same, and the order in which the words lie in the original is much more convenient for paraphrasing than that to which they would be reduced by such a transposition.

SECT. 1.

ask of God for you, *that your love* to one another, and to all the saints, *may abound yet more and more;* and that it may be a rational and truly Christian affection, founded *in* a thorough *knowledge* of the principles which tend so much to endear us to each other, *and in all* that inward feeling and *perception* of these sacred ties which nothing but true experimental religion can give[f]. *So as to prove* by experience *things which differ*[g], and know by trial, how incomparably excellent the Christian character is beyond any other; *that ye may be* found not only *sincere and* cordial, but altogether *inoffensive* through the whole of your Christian course, even *until the* great *day of Christ*: *Being filled with* all *the* genuine *fruits* and effects *of righteousness*[h], *which are* produced *by* virtue of a vital faith in *Jesus Christ*, and by strength and influence derived from him, *to the glory and praise of God;* for that great end of the gospel-revelation is never more effectually answered, than when the temper and conduct of those who profess it, is agreeable to its sacred dictates.

Phil. I. 9.

that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. AMIDST the numberless mercies with which, through the indulgence of our heavenly Father, we are daily surrounded, what can demand our humble and grateful acknowledgments more than our *participation in the gospel?* To whatever afflictions it may expose us, or whatever we may be called to sacrifice to its interests, every day, in which we share its comforts and supports, calls aloud for our praises, both in the enjoyment and in the recollection. And whilst we look back with these sentiments of

[f] *All knowledge and perception.*] We render it *knowledge* and *judgment*, and the former is explained of *speculative*, and the latter of *practical* knowledge; but I think the distinction between the idea suggested by the original is much better preserved by rendering the word αισθησει, *perception*, or inward sensation. He wishes they might not only know the principles which recommend candour and benevolence, but feel their influence on their hearts; which a daily experience and observation shew us, in some great pretenders to this kind of knowledge, is a very different thing.

[g] *Things which differ.*] Mr. Howe justly asserts this translation, as well as that preferred in the preceding note, and introduces this text, to shew that we need *the light of the Spirit* to help us to apprehend, to consider, to judge, and determine our actions agreeably to that judgment. Howe on the Spirit, Vol. I. p. 271.

[h] *Fruits of righteousness.*] If this have, as some imagine, a more peculiar reference to *liberality*, yet I see no reason for confining it to that interpretation; nor do I think it can properly be said, that every liberal and generous man *is filled with all the fruits of righteousness*, unless there be a prevailing uniformity of character, which is not always to be found.

gratitude, let us look forward with cheerful confidence. It is to God's having *begun a good work in us*, that we are to ascribe it, that the glorious gospel of his Son is our joy, and our wonder, rather than our aversion and our scorn. We may therefore be humbly confident, that he *will not forsake the work of his own hands*, but will *finish it*, so that it shall appear worthy of himself *in the great day of the Lord.* SECT. I. Verse 6

No wonder that, where this blessed work is begun, there is a great affection between those who were the instruments of producing it, and those in whom it is produced. No wonder if Paul made mention of these his Christian converts at Philippi, 4, 9 in every prayer of his, offering up requests for them, and praying for the increase of their hope and love. No wonder, on the other side, if their hearts were tenderly set upon him, and that, distant as he was, he seemed to lodge there, and their tender 7 care followed him through every circumstance of his bonds and apology; so that his sufferings and dangers were even more painful to them than their own: while he on his part longed for 8 them all in the bowels of the Lord, and could conceive of no greater charm in liberty itself, than that it might give him an opportunity of cultivating so endearing a friendship by personal converse.

The increase of love founded on knowledge, and attended with other sentiments of experimental religion, is to be numbered among the best of apostolic blessings. Every experience of 9, 10 these things will confirm our resolution of maintaining that godly sincerity, which will render our conversation unblameable, and our account in the day of the Lord comfortable. To glori- 11 fy God by the fruits of righteousness, is the great end for which these rational natures were given us; and it is by the exercise of lively faith in Christ, that these dispositions are cultivated, and these fruits rendered most abundant.

SECT. II.

The apostle informs the Philippians how his imprisonment at Rome had been providentially over-ruled for the service of the gospel; and strongly declares his cheerful hope and confidence, that this great object of his wishes should still be promoted, whatever events might be allotted to him. Phil. I. 12—20.

PHILIPPIANS I. 12.

PHIL. I. 12.
BUT I would ye

MY dear friends, I am fully convinced of the tenderness of your affection for me; and, as I have declared above, I do you the justice to believe, that you have me in your heart,

SECT. II. Phil. I. 12.

while I continue under this confinement for the testimony of Jesus. *But I would have you to know*, my much beloved *brethren, that the things relating to me*, some of which have given you so much concern, on the most friendly and generous principles, have been so over-ruled by the Divine wisdom and goodness, that indeed they *have fallen out rather to the advancement* than hindrance *of the gospel*, which ye were ready to
13 fear. *So that my bonds in Christ are manifested*,[a] and taken notice of *in all the palace* of Cæsar, *and all other* [*places*] in and about the city, and have seemed so remarkable, that many have been excited to inquire, much to their own satisfaction and advantage, what there was in this new and unknown religion, that could animate me so cheerfully to endure so much hardship and persecution in its defence; for they soon traced up my sufferings to this as their only
14 cause. *And* this had so happy an effect, that *many of the brethren in the Lord*, instead of being discouraged, *were emboldened by my bonds*, when they saw my firmness and constancy under them, so as *to venture with much more undaunted courage to preach the word* of the gospel, which our enemies thought, by their persecution of me, to have discountenanced and silenced.
15 *Indeed* I cannot say, that all who have engaged in this work have acted upon the noblest principles; for *some preach Christ even from envy and contention*, desirous to maintain in the church a party that shall oppose me, and willing to add as many abettors to it as they possibly can; *while others* do it *out of* [*sincere*] *affection*, faithfully intending the honour of God, the interest of the Redeemer, and the advancement of human happiness, which is so inseparably connected with the success of Christianity in the
16 world. *The first indeed preach Christ out of strife*, and *not with* purity and *simplicity* of intention, but on the contrary, from the unkindest

should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel:

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will.

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, sup-

[a] *So that my bonds in Christ are manifest.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *so that it is manifest, both in the prætorium and elsewhere, that my bonds are for Christ*, i. e. that I suffer *only* for the sake of Christianity, and not for any real crime; and he argues from the order of the words, φανερους εν Χριστω γενεσθαι; but I think this interpretation would require γενεσθαι to be read twice, which would be a much greater difficulty in the construction than the latter translation he would avoid. Nevertheless in the close of the paraphrase, I have included this thought.

posing to add affliction to my bonds:

and unworthiest motive, as *desirous to add* yet more *affliction to my bonds*, by strengthening the cause of those, who, while they call themselves Christians, seem to place a point of honour and conscience in hurting my reputation, and abetting unreasonable prejudices, which have been so eagerly raised and propagated, to the disadvantage of my character.

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

Whereas others [*preach*] him out *of* cordial *love*, and amidst the many other noble and benevolent views on which they act, have some regard to that comfort which they are sure it will administer to me, *as they know that I am* raised up, and *set* [b] in the place in which I appear *for the defence of the gospel*; and that nothing can make my sorrows and distresses sit so light upon me as to see that this blessed cause is in some measure promoted by them.

18 What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

What then is the results of these attempts, proceeding from such different principles? It is, that I am, in one view or another pleased with them both: for though I could indeed wish that all, engaged in so honourable a work, were pursuing it from the most worthy and generous motives, *yet every way, whether* it be only *in pretence* of pious zeal, *or in* the *truth* of it, *Christ is* however *preached*, and the great doctrine of salvation by him has something of a wider spread. *And in this I* heartily *rejoice, yea, and I will* continue to *rejoice*: for I had much rather that some, who are converted to Christianity by my enemies, should think as ill of me as they themselves do, than that they should remain ignorant of those fundamental truths, on the knowledge of which their eternal happiness depends.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer,

Nor do I much regard the opposition which may arise against me from the ill-designing teachers, or their misguided followers: *for I* well *know, that*, disagreeable as its present effects are, even *this shall issue in* promoting *my salvation* [c], *by your* continued

[b] *I am set.*] Some would render κειμαι, *I lie*, i. e. in bonds for the gospel, in order to make an apology for it.

[c] *My salvation.*] Mr. Pierce explains σωτηρια as signifying *deliverance from prison*, and thinks, that as they that preached Christ out of love made more friends for the apostle, so they that preached him out of envy gave his friends an opportunity of representing his *persecutors* as proceeding upon principles of malice. But to wave other *remarks*, I cannot think that such an event could be said to proceed from the *supply of the Spirit of Christ*.

SECT. II.

Phil. 1. 20.

prayer to God for me, *and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, which shall be liberally dealt out in answer to it: *According to my earnest expectations, and* cheerful *hope, that I shall in nothing be ashamed*, whatever injurious reflections may be made upon my conduct; *but* [*that*,] *by all* the *freedom of speech* which I am still determined to use, *as* it hath *always* been hitherto, [*so*] *now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by* its liberty or confinement, whether in *life or* in *death*. When I consider all possible contingencies that can arise in this view, I find my heart most cheerfully reconciled to them all, and, instead of trembling at the thought of martyrdom itself, I rather rejoice in it.

and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

20 According to my earnest expectation, and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life or by death.

IMPROVEMENT.

How admirable is the conduct of Divine Providence! and in how beautiful a manner does it often work the purposes it wisely and graciously determines, by events which seem to have the most contrary tendency? Who could have imagined that the imprisonment of St. Paul should have been effectual to the advance-
Ver. 20. ment of Christianity? Thus can God animate and encourage his servants, by the extremity which their brethren suffer in his
14 cause; so that they shall wax confident by their bonds and their martyrdom. Let this then reconcile us to all the allotments of Providence, and establish us in *an earnest expectation and hope that Christ will be glorified in all things by us, whether by our life or death:* and who, that knows the grace of God in truth, would not rejoice even in death itself, if the gracious Redeemer, who gave his own life for us, may thereby be magnified?

15 How execrable the temper of those who preached Christ out of envy and contention, and managed a ministry which should have breathed nothing but love, in a view of adding affliction to those bonds that oppressed this best of men! But how generous and amiable the disposition which the apostle expresses when he rejoices in this, that Christ was preached, though the purposes with
18 regard to him were so unkind! These are the wonders which the love of Jesus produces in the soul; thus doth it empty us of every malignant passion, and reconcile us to the most disagreeable events, that may advance his interests. Where such principles inspire the breast, the faithful servants of Jesus will find their own account, while they are wholly intent on his honour. All these events shall turn to their salvation; but let it be remembered, that it is
19 through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ which sanctifies

to us every circumstance through which we pass. That these supplies may be imparted, let us unite our prayers in favour of all who love our common Lord in sincerity. (Eph. vi. 24.)

SECT. III.

Paul freely lays open to the Philippians the sentiments of his heart as to life and death, declaring his desire to be with Christ in a better world, but his readiness to continue here for his Lord's service; and entreats them, that while he did so, he might have the joy to hear that, though he were absent, they maintained the honour of their Christian character, both for piety and courage. Phil. I. 21—30.

PHILIPPIANS I. 21.

SECT. III.

Phil. I. 21.

FOR to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I HAVE expressed my expectation and my hope, that Christ will be glorified in me, whether by life or by death, and it is a hope which I am encouraged to form, by a consciousness of the temper I feel in my heart. *For to me to live* [*is*] *Christ*;[a] he is the supreme end of my life, and I value it only, as it is capable of being referred to the purposes of his honour. *And*, in consequence of this, *to die* [*is*] *gain*; for as this temper argues my interest in the friendship of that Redeemer, who is the Lord of the invisible, as well as the visible world, I am well satisfied that he will make ample provision for my happiness when I quit this transitory life, and surround me with far more important blessings than any which I must then resign.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

22 *And if* he determines that *I live* longer *in the* infirmities and sorrows of mortal *flesh*, I desire to acquiesce; for *this* [*is*] what I esteem *the* great *fruit of my* life and *labour*, and an ample equivalent for all its fatigues, that I may be capable in some measure of promoting the great end which engaged him for a while to make *his* abode here in this humble form of human nature. *And* thus, on the whole, *which I should choose*, if it were entirely referred to my-

[a] *To me to live is Christ*, &c.] Mr. Pierce would translate this clause, *Christ is gain to me living or dying*. But the paraphrase shews how it stands connected on admitting our version. Nor can I think the other version natural, as it quite destroys the *antithesis* in those members of the sentence which are opposed to each other.

SECT. III.

Phil. 1. 23.

self, *I know not: For I am*, as it were, *borne two different ways*;[b] *having*, on the one hand, *a* more earnest *desire*, out of regard to my own immediate happiness, *to be unbound;* to weigh anchor, as it were, *and* quitting these mortal shores, set sail for that happy world, where I shall *be* immediately *with Christ*,[c] *which is better beyond all* comparison and *expression*, than a longer abode here would be, were I to regard only my own immediate comfort and happiness:

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ: which is far better:

24 *But to abide in the flesh*, [*is*] I know *more expedient* and necessary *for you* and my fellow-Christians, who need my farther assistance.

24 Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

25 *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide*,[d] *and* I am heartily willing, though my own personal glory be delayed, to *continue with you all, in order to the advancement of your faith, and* of that *joy* which is supported

25 And having this confidence I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 by it:[e] *That your* boasting and *rejoicing in me may in* and through *Christ Jesus be more abundant*, and your Christian consolation greatly increased, *by my coming among you again* to make you another visit, when I am enlarged from my present confinement; as when it has answered the schemes of Providence with respect to it, I hope I shall be.

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me, by my coming to you again.

27 *Only, let* me always urge this upon you, that

27 Only let your

[b] *Borne two different ways:* συνεχομαι δε εκ των δυο.] The original is very emphatical; and it seems (according to the turn I have given it in the paraphrase,) to be an allusion to a ship stationed at a particular place, and riding at anchor, and at the same time likely to be forced to sea by the violence of the winds; which presents us with a lively representation of the apostle's attachment to his situation in the Christian church, and the vehemence of his desire *to be unbound*, as I have rendered αναλυσαι, that is, to weigh anchor and set sail for the heavenly country.

[c] *Be immediately with Christ.*] This plainly proves, that the separate spirits of good men are *with Christ*, in such a manner, as that their state is *far better* than while they continue in this present world; which a state of insensibility cannot possibly be. But Mr. Fleming very justly observes, that it will not at all disprove that large accession of happiness after the resurrection, which other scriptures plainly declare. Flem. Christ. Vol. III. p. 388. Compare 2 Cor. v. 5—10. The original phrase, πολλω μαλλον κρεισσον, which we render *far better*, is so very emphatical, that I cannot translate it literally, and I know not how better to imitate the sense, than by rendering it *better beyond all expression*; for indeed the apostle seems to labour for expression here, as much as in any part of his writings.

[d] *I know I shall abide.*] Probably, as Mr. Howe conjectures, (Vol. II. p. 89.) he had some *particular revelation* to ground this confidence upon. I can by no means think he refers to any intimation from the palace how it was likely to go with him. He must have known little of princes and courtiers, (especially in Nero's reign,) to build so confidently on such a foundation.

[e] *The advancement of your faith and joy.*] *Your furtherance and joy of faith* is a more literal translation; but as it expresses nothing more than that here given, which is rather plainer and easier to be understood, I hope I need make no apology for such a liberty here, and in several other places.

SECT. III.

Phil. I. 27

conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel;

your conversation[f] may *be* such *as becomes the gospel of Christ*, and may do an honour to your profession of his religion; *that* so *whether I come to visit you, or be* long *absent* from you, *I may* see and *hear concerning you, that ye stand fast in one Spirit, striving together* as *with one soul*, and in the most vigorous united efforts, *for the faith of the gospel;* which it will be your interest to contend for, how violently soever your mightiest adversaries may attempt to wrest it out of your hands.

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

28 *And* indeed I hope it will appear, that you are *not in any degree terrified*[g] *by* all the rage and fury of *your enemies, which*, when duly considered, *is to them an evident token of* surely and quickly approaching *destruction*;[h] as nothing can be a more certain sign that they are ripe for it, than the prevalency of such a persecuting spirit among them: *but to you* it is a sure evidence *of* complete *salvation*, quickly to be revealed, *and that from God* himself, who will reward your pious fortitude with blessings proportionably distinguished.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake,

29 And in this view I would have you to look upon these trials, and, instead of dreading them, to be thankful for them. *For it is granted to you as a favour on the part of Christ*, our great Lord, *not only to believe in him, but also* that you should have the distinguished honour *to suffer for his sake*;[i]

[f] *Let your conversation.*] The learned Professor Francklin thinks a parenthesis begins with these words, which is continued to the end of the 16th verse of the next chapter; but it appears to me neither necessary nor natural to allow it. The word πολιτευεσθε signifies, most literally to behave as *denizens* of some city or corporation; but to render it, as Dr. Scott proposes, (Christian Life, Vol. I. p. 42.) *citizen it* as becomes, &c. is making a great deal too free with the English language.

[g] *Not in any degree terrified*, &c.] It evidently appears from hence, and from several other passages in this epistle, that the Philippians were now in a suffering state, which is a circumstance to be borne in mind as we go on, as it illustrates several masterly strokes in the apostle's address to them.

[h] *Evident tokens of destruction.*] Mr. Pierce by interpreting it, "they think it "a proof of your being obstinately bent "on your own ruin," loses the true sense and spirit of the passage.

[i] *Suffer for his sake.*] From this text and some parallel passages, such as 1 Thess. xi. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. x. 32; 1 Pet. i. 6; some may object to what Dr. Lardner has asserted, when he says, that most of the first *persecutions* which the Christians suffered came from the Jews. It is no wonder, if that obstinate and cruel people were peculiarly enraged against the disciples of Jesus, who so expressly contradicted many of their favourite maxims and tenets. And though, to be sure, their greatest influence was in Judea, yet it is well known, that in other places they had a power of imprisoning and scourging in the synagogues, and it is highly probable, that many of the severities inflicted by Gentile magistrates on the first preachers of the gospel, were at the instigation of the Jews who dwelt

SECT. III. in consequence of which you will be entitled to the peculiar rewards of those who have been martyrs and confessors in the cause of his truth.

Phil. I. 30 (Compare Acts v. 41.) *Having* in a great measure *the same struggle* with the adversaries of the gospel, who labour to overbear it by brutal violence, *as ye saw* to be *in me*[k] when I was among you at Philippi, and was stripped and scourged, and laid in the dungeon and in the stocks, *and* which you *now hear* [*to be*] *in me* at Rome; whither you know I was sent in bonds as an evil doer, having been obliged to appeal to Cæsar for the preservation of my life, when attempted by enemies who would be contented with nothing less than my blood, which they had solemnly bound themselves to shed.

30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 21 How happy must that man be, who can truly say, that *to him to live is Christ, and to die gain!* What a blessed alternative is before him, and how cheerfully may he leave it to Providence to decide which of the two shall be appointed for him! And yet how vain must life be, and how miserable death, to that man who cannot say it! *He that gathereth not with Christ, scattereth abroad*, (Mat. xii. 30:) and when death comes to such an one, it is the loss of all, attended with the final, and alas! the eternal loss of himself. While the good man pronounces it *better be-*
23 *yond all comparison, to depart*, that he may *be with Christ*, and submits only to continue in life, as the part in which self-deny-
24, 25 ing duty requires him to acquiesce. But, O! how unworthy the Christian character, to be averse to so advantageous a remove!
22 To be unwilling, and that even on such terms, *to depart and to be with Christ!* As if any converse, any friendship, any enjoyment, any hope here, were comparable; yea, as if it were preferable to serving him in his immediate presence, under the everlasting tokens of his acceptance and delight.

But if that Master, whom we have the honour to serve, determine to us an abode here for months and years to come, and
25 his church may receive advantage by it, ill shall we requite his

in the cities over which these magistrates presided. Compare Acts xii. 3; xiii. 50; xiv. 19; xvii. 5, 13; xviii. 12; xix. 9. See Dr. Lardner's Cred. Vol. I. p. 417, &c.

k *Now to be in me.*] I see not why this should be explained as referring only, or chiefly, to his conflicts with Judaizing teachers, concerning which at Philippi we read nothing. This seems one of the many texts, which may be expounded in a greater latitude than that in which some late learned commentators and critics have taken it. It would be tedious to mark all instances of a like kind.

love who quitted heaven for this sinful and wretched earth of ours, if we are unwilling for a while to wait till he shall call us up to himself. Very deficient shall we be in that gratitude and zeal which we owe him if we find not something of a heaven begun even below, in doing what may be pleasing to him, in managing his interest, with such degrees of ability as he shall be pleased to honour us with, and so training up others to a meetness for those enjoyments which he hath taught us by his grace to expect and pursue. SECT. III.

Whatever our stations may be, whether in public or private life, let it be our care, in every circumstance and relation, that our *conversation may be as becometh the gospel*; that we may adorn so holy a profession, and answer so glorious a hope. If opposition arise, let it not *terrify* us. It will, if well supported, be a token of *salvation, and that of God.* Let us account it an honour, and the gift of the Divine favour to us, to be called and strengthened to suffer for his sake. So were the prophets, so were the apostles, dignified. We have heard of their noble contentions, that we might emulate them; and well may we do it, since we have the same *Author, Finisher,* and Support *of our faith,* and hope to partake of the same *exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Verse 27 28 29 30

SECT. IV.

The apostle exhorts the Philippians to unanimity and candour, and a tender care for the interest of each other; which he enforces by the generous and condescending love of our blessed Redeemer: of whose humiliation and exalted estate he discourses in a very affectionate manner; pressing them to a due improvement of it, as what would most highly conduce to their own happiness and his comfort. Phil. ii. 1—16.

PHILIPPIANS II. 1.

PHIL. II. 1. *If there be* therefore any consolation in

I HAVE been expressing my concern, that your conversation might be worthy of the gospel; and, as nothing can conduce more to it than the exercise of mutual love, permit me, my dear brethren, to enforce it farther upon you, by every pathetic consideration which our common faith and most holy religion can suggest: and particularly by the affectionate remembrance of my sufferings and your own. (Compare i. 30.) *If therefore* [*there be*] *any consolation in Christ* himself, the great Source of all our enjoyments and hopes, for whose sake we have endured so SECT. IV. Phil. II. 1

CHAP. IV. Phil. II. 1.

many extremities; *if* there be *any comfort* and delight in the exercise *of* the most tender and endeared *love*; *if* there be *any* communion of hearts, founded upon the *communication of* one and *the* same *Spirit*, working in all our souls; *if* there be on the whole *any bowels* in human nature, *and* any *compassions*, either manifested by God to us, or wrought into the constitution 2 of our being by the great Author of it: In a word, if there be any affectionate bond, by which you are united to me, who have been by Divine grace made your spiritual father, and by whose ministry you have been made acquainted with these engaging views; *complete ye my joy*, and endeavour to fill my heart with the most exalted pleasure, while I lie in these bonds, for my fidelity to God and to you. Now in this view I am desirous beyond expression, *that ye may* all *be unanimous* *, *maintaining the same love*, however your sentiments, and, in some instances, your practice may be divided, still *having your souls joined together*, and all their ardour combined *in attending to the one* great *thing*, which ought to be the leading concern of every Christian, the advancement of vital, practical holiness: by attending diligently to which, you will be diverted from those undue attachments to smaller matters, which so often divide the affection of Christians, and take them off from the pursuit of the noblest objects.

Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

3 And in this view especially guard against pride, and [*let*] *nothing* [*be done*] or said *out of* a spirit of contradiction and *contention*, *or from vain-glory*, to draw the eyes of others upon you, and make yourselves the subjects of discourse and admiration; *but in* unaffected simplicity and *lowliness of mind*, *esteeming others as more excellent than yourselves*; which, on

3 *Let* nothing *be done* through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

* *Unanimous*, &c.] It is difficult to translate or paraphrase these words so as to avoid some appearance of tautology. In my third letter to the author of Christianity not founded on Argument, p. 43, I had given a translation in the main the same with this; but on farther examination, wherein I had there united the second and third clause, as an explication of the first, *that ye all be joined together in the same love*, I here (as in my Sermon on Christian Candour, p. 8) join the two former and two latter clauses, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, *be unanimous, maintaining the same love*; συμψύχοι τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες, *having your souls joined together, in attending to the one thing*. An improvement, for which I am obliged to my learned, accurate, and worthy friend Dr. Daniel Scott.

SECT. IV.

Phil. II. 4.

one account or another, you may know almost every one to be. *Do not every one aim at his own* separate *interests*, profits and conveniencies, *but* aim *each of you also at* promoting *the interests of others*: be always ready to deny yourselves for the general good, and to condescend to one another, as the happiness of every particular brother and friend may require.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

In this respect, and in every other, *let the same mind be in* every one of *you*, *which was also in* so eminent and amiable a degree in *Christ Jesus*, whom we call our Master and our Lord; Even in that illustrious and adorable Person, *who*, *being*, long before his appearance in human flesh, *in the form of God*,[b] and having been from eternal ages possessed of Divine perfections and glories, when manifesting himself to the patriarchs and prophets of old, *thought it not robbery* and usurpation *to be* and appear *as God*[c] assuming the highest Divine names, titles, and attributes, by which the supreme

6 Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

[b] *Who being in the form of God.*] Few of my readers can be ignorant of the pains learned men have taken to establish two very different translations and senses of this important text, and of the contrary uses which have been made of it in the controversy relating to the Deity of our ever blessed Redeemer. The critics, who would render ὡς ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο ἶσα θεῷ, &c. *did not eagerly catch at a likeness to*, or *equality with God*, built a great deal of their argument on the opposition of the two clauses, and the force of the particle ἀλλὰ. *He did not affect this equality*, but *humbled himself*. I have often wondered at the stress laid on this, since every one must know that ἀλλὰ often signifies *nevertheless*, and accordingly it is frequently rendered so in our version, particularly Mark xiv. 36; John xi. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 12; Gal. iv. 30; 2 Tim. i. 12. And, which is especially to the present purpose, it is sometimes thus rendered, when preceded by the particle οὐκ; see Rom. v. 13, 14; 2 Cor. xii. 16. I have given such an interpretation of the passage as appeared to me, on mature deliberation, most agreeable to the text itself, in comparison with other scriptures; and the learned reader cannot be at a loss to find the opinion of the most celebrated writers on each side of the question relating to it. I hardly recollect any that have discussed it with more accuracy than Bos, in his Exercit. 2d ed. p. 196—203; and Sir Richard Ellys, in his Fortuita Sacra, p. 178—228. Bishop Burnet well observes, that the Socinian interpretation is extremely cold and insipid, as if it were a mighty argument of humility that, though Christ wrought miracles, which they strangely think signified by the phrase of *being in the form of God*; yet he did not set up for supreme deity. See Burnet on the Art. p. 46.

[c] *To be* and appear *as God.*] So εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ is most exactly rendered, agreeable to the force of εἶναι in many places in the Septuagint, which Dr. Whitby has collected in his note on this place. The proper Greek phrase for *equal to God* is ἴσος τῷ Θεῷ, which is used, John v. 18. Mr. Pierce thus paraphrases the clause before us, "He was not eager in retaining that "likeness to God," of which he was before possessed; and he observes, that, had it referred to what was considered as future, the expression would have been τὸ εἶναι not εἶναι, and farther pleads, that the apostle's design here is not to caution the Philippians against coveting what they had no claim to, but to engage them, after the example of Christ, to give up their own right for the advantage of others

SECT. IV. Being has made himself known, and receiving from his servants divine honours and adorations: *Nevertheless*, in his infinite condescension and compassion to us miserable sinners, *emptied himself* of all this glory, *taking* [*upon him*,] instead of the splendours which he had been used to wear as the Sovereign of angels, *the* humble *form* not only of a common man, but even *of a servant, when made in the likeness of men*, which itself had been a most astonishing stoop, even though he had appeared in the pomp of the greatest monarch. *And* yet even this condescension to the rank of low life among sinful mortals, wonderful as it was, did not content him: for, *being found in fashion* and appearance *as a man*, and having put on all the innocent infirmities of our nature, *he humbled himself* still farther, *becoming obedient even unto death*; and indeed to no common and gentle form of dissolution, but to *the* ignominious, as well as painful *death of the cross*, on which he expired, as you well know, like one of the vilest and most accursed of mankind.

Phil. ii. 7.

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 *Therefore God* his Father, to whom such a course of filial obedience, proceeding from such noble principles of piety and charity, could not but be most acceptible, *hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity*,[d] *and granted him a name*, the honours of which are *superior to* those of *every* other *name* that can come in comparison with it. *So that in the name of Jesus*, in humble subjection to his authority and command, *every knee should bow*, and every spirit submit, *of celestial* [*beings*,] in their various orders of dignity *and* glory, as well as of *those upon and under the earth*:[e] angels and men, the liv-

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

[d] *God hath exalted him to the most eminent dignity.*] This seems a more natural translation of the word ὑπερύψωσε than what Mr. Peirce proposes, who would render it, *exalted him higher than before*. I think nothing can be more evident, than that he who was exalted was humbled, and consequently, that there was a proper change made in the state and condition of Christ, by that emptying himself spoken of, ver. 7.

[e] *Those upon and under the earth.*] There can be no doubt but the former clause relates to Christ's being made Sovereign over the angelic spirits, Eph. i. 10. But whether this latter phrase, *Things upon, and under the earth*, may not relate to the *living* and the *dead*, rather than *men* and *devils*, some have queried; compare Rev. i. 18; Rom. xiv. 9; and it is certain that the word καταχθονίων sometimes in the Greek classics signifies the *dead*. But on the whole, as the expression is ambiguous, I have, as I usually do in such cases, included both in the paraphrase.

SECT. IV.

Phil. II. 10.

ing and the dead, yea, devils themselves shall do him homage; and he be ever adored as the Saviour of his redeemed people, as the Head of all holy and happy spirits, and the Sovereign and uncontroulable Lord of all those whose rebellion against him and his heavenly Father, hath made them the worthy objects of perpetual displeasure and punishment. *And* thus hath God taken effectual measures, that *every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ*, his anointed Son, [*is*] indeed *Lord* of all, *to the glory of God the Father*, in whose name he administers his mediatorial kingdom, and to whose honour he professedly refers it.

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

11

12 Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; work out your own

Therefore, my beloved Christian brethren, as God hath, in the person of his Son, so gloriously rewarded that bright assemblage of virtue for which he was so incomparably illustrious, and particularly, that condescension, humility, and benevolence, which I have so earnestly been recommending to you; let it be considered by you, as an engagement to tread in his steps, with diligence and resolution, so far as the feeble powers of human nature may admit. And, *as* justice requires me to acknowledge that *ye have always been obedient* to my instructions and exhortations, while I have had the pleasure of being with you, be solicitous, that *not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence*,[f] (which though it deprives you of some advantages, yet, as it is owing to my bonds in your cause, ought to increase the tenderness of your concern for my comfort,) you may *work out your own salvation*,[g] with great earnestness and assiduity; yea,

12

[f] *Much more in my absence.*] Though there be an ambiguity in the connection of this clause, if the grammar only be considered, I think the sense obliges us to join it with the following, rather than with the preceding words. The paraphrase suggests the reasons why his absence should make them more eagerly solicitous in *working out their salvation*: but I know no reason to apprehend that they were less obedient to Paul when he was with them, than to any messages they might have received in his absence, and the word *now* in this view seems decisive.

[g] *Work out your own salvation.*] Mr. Pierce has advanced a very peculiar interpretation of this text: for he would render it, "*promote the welfare of each* "*other*," urging that *heauton* sometimes signifies the same with *allelon*; compare Eph. iv. 32. But not to insist on the expression, *with fear and trembling*, as greatly favouring the common interpretation, it is obvious, that *heauton* is three times in this chapter put for *our own* things, ver. 3, 4, 21. And whereas it is pleaded on the other side, that the sense given above is most agreeable to the connection, it seems to me that this turn in the expression farther suggests, that, by following those generous maxims the apostle had been recommending, they would

SECT. IV. Phil. II. 12.

considering its infinite importance, *with* holy *fear and trembling.* I say your own salvation, for that will be most effectually secured and promoted by the temper I have been now re-
13 commending. Seize that happy opportunity of doing it which Divine grace affords; *for God is he who worketh in you,*[h] *both to will and to perform of* [*his own*] *good pleasure.* You ought therefore to consider every good affection and purpose which arises in your heart, as suggested by his grace, which waits upon you, to enable you to bring it into perfection. And remember, that he operates with such sovereign freedom, that if these condescending favours be slighted, they may in righteous displeasure be withdrawn; and I leave you, my dear brethren, to reflect how fatal the consequence would then be.

salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

14 Go on therefore resolutely in your whole Christian course, and *let all things be done without* those *murmurings and disputings* which so ill become the relation in which you stand to each other, and that community of interests in which, as the servants of this compassionate Saviour, you are united.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 On the whole, let me, by every most affecting consideration, urge it upon you again and again, *that ye may be blameless and inoffensive*, and act up to the dignity of your relation as *the children of God*, maintaining an *unexceptionable* character, *in the midst of* all the malignity which you must expect to encounter from *a perverse and crooked generation*, with which you are surrounded: *amongst whom*, be concerned that ye may *shine as* elevated *lights*[i] *in the* dark *world* about

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world:

also most effectually secure their own salvation; which instead of detracting any thing from the force of the argument, as the words are usually understood, greatly increases it.

[h] *He who worketh in you.*] The original is very emphatical, as Mr. Howe beautifully observes, (Howe's Works, Vol. II. p. 21.) for it asserts, on the one hand, that God is actually or continually operating, and on the other, that thus to work in the heart for such noble purposes, is the *prerogative of God*, and an effect worthy his Divine attributes and perfections. I can by no means think with Dr. Clarke, that this merely signifies, that God hath given us a *power* to choose and to act, (Post. Serm. Vol. VI. p. 69.) but that it refers to the operation of *Divine grace*, as is strongly intimated by the concluding clause, *of his own good pleasure*; which Mr. Howe finely explains, not so much of his *goodness* in general, as of his *sovereign freedom* in these operations; he works [illegible] *freely*. Compare Mat. xi. 26, which suggests the caution expressed in the paraphrase.

[i] *Shine as* elevated *lights*, &c.] I am

SECT. IV.

you; that you may direct those that sail on this dangerous sea, and secure them from suffering shipwreck on those fatal rocks which every where lie in their way. Thus must you, as you tender the lives and the souls of your fellow-creatures, be continually *holding out* to them, for their guidance and instruction, *the word of life*, by which you have been directed to steer safely for the blessed haven of glory and immortality, and whereby they may receive the same benefit. A variety of important considerations concur to inspire you with so happy a resolution, and I doubt not but you will allow some weight to this among the rest, that it will greatly tend *to* promote *my rejoicing in the day of Christ, that* it may appear *I have not run* through the course of my apostolic office *in vain, nor laboured* in the duties of it *in vain*; but that the great end of it has been at least in part answered, in the glory of God, by your salvation and usefulness.

Phil. II. 16

16 Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ; that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Few Christians are unacquainted with the remarkable phrases in which it is here expressed. But how few seriously pause upon it, and labour to affect their hearts with its important meaning! Who can conceive the dignity and glory of Christ, when *in the form of God, and accounting it no robbery or usurpation to be as God?* Who can Ver. 6
conceive of that mysterious act; of that (if we may be allowed to say it,) more than mysterious love, by which he emptied himself of this glory, that he might assume the humble *form of a* 7
servant, being found in fashion like a man, and then might stoop 8
yet lower, so as to become *obedient to death, even the death of the cross?* Often let us contemplate this amazing object: often let us represent to our admiring, to our dissolving hearts, the man Christ Jesus extended there, and pouring forth his soul in agony and blood. As often let us remember his high original, his Divine glories, the bosom of the Father, the throne of God. With

indebted to the learned and eloquent Mons. Saurin for this version and paraphrase. He has justly and beautifully observed that the word φαροις has this energy, and alludes to the buildings which we call *light-houses*; the most illustrious of which was raised in the island of Pharos, when Ptolemy Philadelphus built that celebrated tower, on which a bright flame was always kept burning in the night, that mariners might perfectly see their way, and be in no danger of suffering shipwreck upon the rocks which they were to pass in their entrance into the haven at Alexandria. Saur. Serm. Vol. IX. p. 460.

SECT. IV. pleasure let us reflect, that he is returned to it, and that, having ennobled this low nature of ours by so intimate an union with the Divine God his Father, hath in that nature *exalted him, and*
Verse 9 *given him a name above every name*, human or angelic, in the visible, or in all the distant and different regions of the invisible
10 world. Let our knees gladly bow to so amiable a Sovereign, and let us with pleasure view the approaching day, when every
11 knee shall submissively own his authority, and *every tongue confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In the mean time, let us never forget the purposes for which the apostle hath here called our meditations to these wonderful and instructive truths. It is to inculcate upon us (O may we
5 ever inculcate it upon ourselves!) that the same mind may always be in us that was also in him. That, if there be any conso-
1, 2 lation in such a Saviour, any comfort in such love, as he teaches, any bowels of tenderness in human nature, any endearing fellowship in the one Spirit which we derive from him, we may with united hearts and hands be carrying on the one great business of
12 his servants, *working out our salvation with fear and trembling*; avoiding every thing that may grieve and injure others, every thing that may discredit our holy profession. And being now
15 made by him *the children of God*, way we *shine* with a bright, steady flame, as *lights in the world*, and *hold out*, for the benefit
16 of all around us, *the word of life*, as the gospel which redeems us from the second death, and raises us to eternal life, may properly be called. May we spread its lustre through as wide a circle as possible, and with it that happiness, which nothing but a cordial belief of it and subjection to it can bring to the human heart.

To conclude, let us learn, from these wise and pious exhortations of the apostle, at once our duty and our dependence; our
Verse duty, *to work out our own salvation*; our dependence on the grace
13 of him, *who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.* And therefore let us so seek Divine grace, and rest upon it, as to exert with vigour and resolution the faculties
12 which are to co-operate with it; and let us so endeavour to exert the faculties which God hath given us, as to confide in Divine grace, and rest continually upon it; without which we shall neither will, nor do any thing pleasing to God, or available to our own salvation: for in this sense *salvation is of the Lord*, and through *his blessing*, which *is upon his people.* (Psal. iii. 8.)

SECT. V.

The apostle assures the Philippians of his readiness even to die for their advantage, but expresses his hope of being set at liberty, and restored to them in person: in the mean time, he promises them very soon a visit from Timothy, and sends Epaphroditus for their immediate satisfaction; of whose late sickness, and ardent love for them, he speaks in very affectionate terms. Phil. II. 17, *to the end.*

PHIL. II. 17.

YEA, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

PHILIPPIANS II. 17.

SECT. V.

Phil. II. 17.

I HAVE been expressing my hope, that your temper and behaviour will be such as would prove my labours among you not to have been in vain, and afford me matter of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. But it is impossible for me fully to express the earnestness with which I desire that it may be so. *For if I should even be*, if I may use such language, *poured forth*, and my blood be shed *as a* kind of libation, or *drink-offering*,[a] *on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith*, while you are presented by my means as an acceptable offering to God, far from lamenting that I should meet with death in such a cause, *I* rather *rejoice, and congratulate you all* on that happy circumstance into which you are brought by that gospel which I have at so great an expence delivered to you.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me.

18 *And on this account, do you also rejoice, and congratulate with me*,[b] for while suffering the last extremities in a cause like this, I am happy, and ought to be regarded as an object of congratulation rather than of condolence.

19 But I trust in

19 It will indeed be no surprise to me, if my

[a] *If I should be poured forth*, &c.] This is the proper import of the word σπενδομαι. Almost every reader must know, that as oil and wine made a part of the provisions of the table God had ordained in the Jewish ritual, that a proportionable quantity of each should attend every bullock, goat, ram, lamb, or kid, which was presented at his altar. The heathens also used such libations, and sometimes they used blood, mingled with wine, in honour of their idol deities. Compare Psal. xvi. 4. The apostle considers the faith of the Philippians as an acceptable sacrifice presented to God; and if he incurred martyrdom for his zeal to promote it, he might speak of his blood as a libation poured out upon occasion of it, with greater beauty and propriety than most commentators have observed.

[b] *Congratulate with me.*] I cannot read this heroic discourse of the apostle, without reflecting on the behaviour of the brave Athenian, mentioned by Plutarch, (Glor. Athen. ap. Op. p. 347.) who returned to Athens, from the victorious battle of Marathon, bleeding to death with the wounds he had received in the action, and coming directly to the house where the magistrates were assembled, uttered only these two words χαιρετε συνχαιρετε, *take your share of our joy*, and immediately dropped down dead at their feet.

SECT. V.

work and testimony as an apostle should end in martyrdom, *but*, as I intimated above, (chap. i. 25.) I do not immediately expect it; and, in the mean time, would omit nothing which may shew my endeared affection to my Christian brethren, and particularly to you. In pursuance of which, *I hope in the Lord Jesus*, to whose direction and controul I desire to submit all my schemes, and in whose hand the life and the ways of his servants are, that I shall *quickly* be able *to send Timothy to you; that* by him, not only you, but *I also may be refreshed, knowing* from him [*the state of*] *your affairs* more particularly than I can otherwise hope to do. My respect for you inclines me to make choice of him on this occasion, though I can ill spare him; *for I have none* here with me in all respects *of a like disposition, who will so naturally*, with such a genuine tenderness and concern, *take the care of your affairs*.

Phil. II. 19.

the Lord Jesus, to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state.

20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state.

21 Indeed a temper like this is too uncommon; *for*, great as our engagements and obligations to a contrary disposition are, I may say it, with very few exceptions, that almost *all seek their own things*,[a] *none the things of Christ Jesus*. It is hard to find, even among those that call themselves his disciples, any who have their Master's interest so affectionately at heart as not to neglect it, in some degree at least, out of regard to their own secular interest and pleasure, ease and safety. *But you know the experience of him*, who was with me as well as Silas, in that memorable visit which I first made you, (Acts xvi. 1, 12.) and you had an opportunity of seeing, *that as a son with a father, he served with me in* the work of *the gospel*, and neglected no occasion of doing, in the most affectionate manner, whatever might lighten either my labours or my sufferings. *I hope therefore to send him very quickly* to you, *as soon as I see how my affairs will be determined*. And though he be so useful to me, I shall be willing to spare him upon your account. Till they come to a

21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

24 But I trust in

[a] *All seek their own things.*] Perhaps the apostle may speak this in reference to the part which some Christians, and possibly some ministers, at Rome had acted, to whom he might have proposed this journey; which they might decline through too great a regard to their own ease and convenience, which laid him under the necessity of parting with Ti-

mothy.

SECT. V.

the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly.

more certain crisis, I conclude it will be most agreeable to you that he should defer his journey. *But I trust in* the providence and care of *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whose guardianship I commit the life I have devoted to his service, *that I shall soon* be set at liberty, and *come to you myself.* *Yet* in the mean time, or at least till Timothy can be more conveniently spared, *I thought it necessary* and expedient *to send to you Epaphroditus, my* dear *brother, and* diligent *fellow-labourer* in the work, *and fellow-soldier* in the arduous combat and painful sufferings of Christ: *but* who was *your* most welcome *messenger* to me[d], *and the* ready *minister to* the relief of *my necessities*[e], by whose faithful hand I received that liberal supply which your pious friendship so cheerfully advanced. Had I only consulted my own convenience and pleasure, I should have been glad to have detained him longer; but I now give him his dispatches, *because he was exceedingly desirous of* returning to *you all,* for whom he has a most endeared affection, *and was* much *dejected* and troubled *because* he knew *you had heard that he was sick,* and he feared lest the tidings should grieve you too much, as he could not but know how affectionately you love him. *And indeed* it is very true, that *he was sick, and* in all human appearance *near to death*[f]: *but God had mercy upon him,* and recovered him; *and* I must say, in this instance, he had *not* compassion *upon him alone, but also on me, that I might not have sor-*

Phil. II. 24.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

25

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

26

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

27

[d] *Your messenger.*] As the word is ἀπόστολον, some would render it your apostle, and they have stooped so low as to draw an argument from hence, to prove that he was their bishop in the modern sense of the word, and that such bishops are the immediate successors of the apostles in their extraordinary rank and power. But the ablest patrons of diocesan episcopacy have had the modesty and prudence to spare this argument, as it is so incongruous to suppose that he should be employed as a messenger to carry the churches alms to Paul, when he must have had such important business at home; nor does what follows by any means agree with such a supposition. See Mr. Peirce's Vind. p. 358, &c.

[e] *He that ministered to my necessities;* Ὁ δὲ λειτουργὸς τῆς χρείας μου.] Mr. Peirce follows Castellio in rendering it, "*he who is now to act for me with you,*" supposing the apostle's intention was to appoint Epaphroditus as his representative in the church, who was to supply his place during his absence, and whom therefore he styles ἀπόστολον. But the word χρεία is in other parts of this epistle, as well as elsewhere, used in such a manner as to favour the interpretation given in our version. Compare chap. iv. 16, 19.

[f] *Nigh unto death.*] The journey and change of air might contribute to his disorder, as well as the assiduity of his attendance on Paul, and dispatching his affairs in all weathers, and perhaps at all hours.

CHAP. V.

Phil. II. 27.

row upon sorrow; as I certainly should have had, if the loss of such a beloved friend, and of so useful a person, had been added to all the other afflictions I sustain in this imprisonment, and amidst so much perverse and ungrateful opposition. *I have therefore sent him* away to you, *with the greater diligence, that seeing him again* in that comfortable state of health and spirit, to which by the Divine goodness he is now restored, *ye might rejoice; and that I might be the less sorrowful*, while I in spirit partake with you in the satisfaction which I know this interview will give on both sides. *Receive him therefore* as *in the Lord* Jesus Christ, as mindful of your mutual relation to him, *with all joy*, in the bowels of Christian love, as well as the demonstrations of natural friendship: *and hold* persons of *such* a character, whatever their station of life may be, *in high estimation*. *For* it was, in a great measure, *on account of* that zeal and fervour which he exercised in carrying on *the work of* the Lord Jesus *Christ*, both in preaching the gospel, and attending my necessities, that *he was nigh unto death, having disregarded* even [*his own*] *life, that he might fill up the deficiency of your service to me*, and might if it were possible, perform to me in his own person all the kind offices which your whole society could have rendered me had you been with me as he was.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness and hold such in reputation:

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 17, 18

To what sublime heights of piety and virtue does the immortal hope of the gospel elevate the mind of mortal man! Behold this holy apostle, not only presenting himself as a resolute victim at the altar of God, but speaking of that stroke by which his blood was to be poured out as an occasion of joy, and calling for the congratulation of his friends upon it! Behold him with pleasure resigning the society of those who were dearest and most useful to him, at a time when he seemed most of all to need their assistance; even of that friend, who would most naturally care

‖ *Deficiency of your service*: Το ὑμων ὑστερημα της προς μ' λειτουργιας.] Mr. Peirce would render this, *supplying the remainder of your benefactions to me*, which in sense is much the same. The apostle considers them as disposed to have rendered him what service they could *in person*; but not having an opportunity to do it themselves, the good Epaphroditus was in this respect their proxy and *representative*.

for their estate, when he knew none that were like-minded! And O that this might be the character of all the ministers of Christ naturally, and with genuine affection, to care for the state of those committed to them, taking thought for them and the oversight of them, not by constraint, but from a principle of love, which shall make all necessary labours natural and easy! But alas, how rare a character is it, and how much reason is there to lament the prevalency of a contrary disposition among all ranks of men, the sacred order itself not excepted; while *all seek their own things, none the things of Jesus Christ!* SECT. V. Verse 20

What ingratitude does this argue! Yea what stupid insensibility, that any thing, that every thing, should be dearer to us than the interest of that Saviour who *purchased us to himself with his blood!* Happy they, who are distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, in a time of prevailing apostacy! which we are not to wonder if we discover in these latter ages, when the apostles found cause to speak thus in their own. How beautiful a description does he here give of the piety and humility of young Timothy while *serving with him as a son with a father in the gospel!* Thus let young and aged ministers behave to each other, as fathers and sons: the young paying the elder such reverend regards, the aged affording to the younger such kind and tender patronage, and shewing a solicitous concern to prepare them for filling up their places in the church with increasing advantage. 21 22

Some obvious instruction arises from what is here said of good Epaphroditus, whose affection to his Christian friends was so ardent, and whose zeal for the work of Christ had even endangered his life. Great reason is there to hold such, wherever they are found, in high esteem, tenderly to sympathize with them, earnestly to entreat God for them, if at any time diseases threaten their useful lives; and to own the *mercy of God not to them only, but to us*, when he is pleased to raise them up, and restore them to a capacity of ministering in his church. Let us go back in our memories, to the days and weeks of dangerous sickness which any of us have known, and humble ourselves before God, that we have no better improved for his glory, and for the good of his church, his mercy to us, in bringing us up from the gates of the grave. 30 29 27

SECT. VI.

Paul exhorts the Philippians to fix their whole dependence on Christ and his gospel, as he assures them he himself did, though he had more to glory in with respect to Jewish privileges and advantages than most who valued themselves so highly upon them. Phil. III. 1—14.

SECT. VI. Phil. III. 1.

PHILIPPIANS III. 1.

AS *for what remains*, *my* dear *brethren*, that I may proceed to what I farther design in this epistle, let me exhort you, whatever may become of me, or of yourselves, so far as any worldly interest and prospect is concerned, that ye *rejoice in the* protection and care of the *Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] our blessed Redeemer, and in the promises and hopes given us by him. I have already insisted upon them with pleasure (chap. i. 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, &c. chap. ii. 5, 11,) and *to write the same things to you*,[b] on such a topic, [*is*] *not grievous to me, and* [*it is*] not only *safe*, but necessary *for you*; as nothing can tend more to fortify you against the many temptations and enemies with which you are surrounded.

PHIL. III. 1. FINALLY, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

And, in farther prosecution of my great design 2 for your spiritual security and edification, let me urge you to *beware of* those invidious, malignant, contentious persons, whom I cannot forbear calling *dogs*,[c] so much have they of a brutal and canine disposition, snarling and malicious, greedy and fierce. *Beware of evil workers*, who, while they cry up the law, act

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil work

[a] *Rejoice in the Lord.*] Some have apprehended a contrast with chap. ii. 25, 28, where he tells them, "he had sent "Epaphroditus, that he might rejoice at "his coming;" as if he had said, And now I add, that while you are rejoicing in him, I would have you *Rejoice in the Lord*, observing the interposition of Christ, in his being preserved and restored to you. In this connection it might have been made the conclusion of the second chapter, but it may so naturally, as in the paraphrase, introduce what follows, that I did not choose to alter the usual division.

[b] *To write the same things.*] Diodate thinks this an intimation that he had written a former epistle to them, which is now lost. Compare 1 Cor. v. 9; Col. iv. 16. Mr. Fleming thinks it refers to what he had said to them formerly, and that he only gives some hints at these larger conversations in the following verses, which he thinks makes them something obscure. Flem. on the first Resur. p. 4.

[c] *Beware of dogs.*] This may very possibly be an allusion to Isa. lvi. 10—12. Compare ver. 19; Tit. i. 11, 12; Rom. xvi. 18; Gal. vi. 12, 13. The Jews used to call the Gentiles *dogs*, and perhaps St. Paul may use this language when speaking of their proud bigots, by way of retaliation. Compare Rev. xxii. 15. L'Enfant tells us of a custom at Rome, to chain their dogs at the door of their houses, and to put an inscription over them, *Beware of this dog*, to which he seems to think these words may refer.

SECT. VI. Phil. III. 3.

ers, beware of the concision.

in direct contradiction to its most important precepts and grand design. *Beware of the concision*, for such I must call that body of men which proudly usurps the name of the circumcision, whereas the external right they so much contend for is but an unprofitable cutting and mangling of the flesh, when performed from such principles, and imposed with such a temper: so that the bloody work of it may seem an emblem of the cruel manner in which they cut and mangle the church. Be on your guard against them, I say it again and again, *for*, how unwilling soever they may be to allow it, *we* Christians *are* indeed *the circumcision, who worship God*, not with the ritual observances of the Mosaic law, but *in spirit and* in truth; who *boast* not in Jewish privileges, but *in Christ Jesus*, through whom we obtain Divine favour and acceptance, *and have no confidence in the flesh*, though we do in fact wear the mark of circumcision in it, or however else we may be distinguished by birth, education, or any external forms. *And indeed* I say this, not as if I were deficient in any thing, wherein another can boast, for it is evident *I have also what might be* [*an occasion of*] *confidence in the flesh*, for *if any other thinks he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I* fear not to say I [*have*] probably *more* than he. I was not only *circumcised*, but that, according to the exactest institution of Moses, *on the eighth day*[4] after I was born; *of the stock of Israel*, God's chosen people, not as some circumcised families are descended from Ishmael, or Edom; and *of the tribe of Benjamin*, whose lot lay so near the temple of God, and which joined not with the ten tribes in their general revolt, but still adhered to Judah, and to the true worship of God at Jerusalem. Not only by my father's, but my mother's side, have I been from generation to generation *an Hebrew*, descended from a long line *of Hebrews*[5], so that I reckon no proselyte

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man think-eth that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the He-

[4] *Circumcised the eighth day.*] It evidently appears, that the Jews did not only lay a great deal of stress on the right of circumcision, but on the time of performing it, *i. e.* exactly on the *eighth* day. The Septuagint have an addition to Gen. xvii. 14. which is also found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, "*the male child, which is not* "*circumcised on the eighth day, shall be cut* "*off from among his people.*"

[5] *Hebrews of Hebrews.*] If as some have conjectured, the turbulent person to whom

ACT. VI. Phil. III. 5.

of foreign nations in my genealogy; *with respect to the law* I was *a Pharisee*, of a sect which most strictly and vigorously adheres to it, and has adopted that guard which tradition has set around it to secure it from the least degree of
6 violation. *With respect to zeal* for these rituals, which they so eagerly enjoin, I myself was once employed with the greatest fury in *persecuting the church* of Christ, and endeavouring, if possible, to root it up from the face of the earth: *as to that righteousness, which is* placed *in* an exact observation of *the law* in its external precepts, I have been quite *blameless* and unexceptionable, so that those who knew me most intimately could not have accused me of any wilful transgression, or of neglecting any expiatory rites and sacrifices appointed in case of
7 involuntary errors. This was my character and state; and there was a time when I was proud of being able to say all this, and thought myself exceedingly happy. *But* now my views of things are altered, and a very different scene hath opened itself upon me, so that *the things which were* once *gain to me*, and which I most valued myself upon, *I have* now *accounted* but as *loss for Christ*[t]. I look upon them as things most despicable when compared with him, yea as things which would be extremely mischievous to me if they should in any degree prevent my application to him, or my sharing the benefits of
8 those that believe in him. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things*, how valuable soever, to be *but loss* and damage, *with respect to the most excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord*, which so much exceeds every other knowledge or interest that can come in competition with it; *for* the sake of *which I have suffered the loss of all things*[s], having been expelled with infamy

brews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal; persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and

Paul especially refers, were only the son of a proselyte, and not of a native Jew, there was a peculiar propriety in dwelling on these circumstances. But on every interpretation it will appear proper, and I am always cautious of clogging the paraphrase with the supposition of any thing of which there is not some considerable proof.

[t] *I accounted loss for Christ.*] i. e. *I threw* [illegible] as mariners do their goods on [illegible] before get a value, lest they should endanger their lives; in which sense ζημια is used, Acts xxvii. 21.

[s] *Have suffered the loss of all things.*] It is not by any means improbable, that a sentence of *excommunication* might be pronounced against Paul, or, at least, that his goods might be *confiscated*, as we know other believing Hebrews, though probably no one of them so obnoxious to their Jewish brethren as himself, were actually treated. Heb. x. 33, 34.

do count them but dung that I may win Christ,

from among the Jews, and deprived of all the towering hopes to which my ambition might once have aspired: *And*, far from repining at it, *I count them* not worth mentioning, for they seem to be *but* vile refuse and *dung*, *that I may gain* that inestimable prize and treasure, *Christ* Jesus, in whom alone I shall be safe, and rich, and happy for ever. SECT. VI. Phil. III. 8.

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Though not only reputation *and* power, ease and plenty, but even life itself should be sacrificed to this view, I am happy enough, if I may but *be found in him*, vitally united to him by a true faith and love, and so taken under his protection and favour; *not having mine own righteousness, which [is] of the law*; such a righteousness as only consists in observing the precepts or expiations of the Jewish religion, which I was once so solicitous to establish; nor any confidence in any legal righteousness whatever, as my plea before God, *but that* I may be interested in that *which [is] by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which [is] of God through faith*; that which he has appointed we should obtain and secure, by believing in his Son, and making our application to him as creatures condemned and undone, whose only refuge is in his righteousness and grace. (Compare Rom. i. 16; iii. 22; x. 3.) 9

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

This is my great concern, experimentally *to know him, and* feel *the* efficacious *power of his resurrection* continually working upon my mind, *and* bearing me forward with the most cheerful resolution, to share in *the fellowship of his sufferings* too, *being made conformable to his death*, in all the tortures of crucifixion itself, should his providence call me to it. 10

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead:

If having done and suffered any thing which God lays in my way, *I may* but *by any* possible *means* at length *attain to the resurrection*[k] *from the dead*,[l] and that consummate holiness and bles-

[k] *Attain to the resurrection.*] Mr. Pierce would render the words εἰ πως καταντήσω, *that any way I may arrive at the resurrection*, &c. supposing it alludes to the ship's port it is bound for. But arriving at the port it is bound for. But the word *attained* has an ambiguity, which equally answering the original, seems better to suit the 12th verse, in which the apostle certainly means something more than that he had not *yet arrived at the resurrection of the dead.* The particle *if*, in this connection, implies no *uncertainty* of the resurrection, nor any *doubt* as to Paul's attaining it.

[l] *The resurrection from the dead.*] Mr. Fleming understands St. Paul as speaking here of a *first resurrection* of martyrs and the most eminent saints, which many good men might fall short of, and of which he thinks the apostle himself might

SECT. VI. Phil. III. 11.

sedness which he will then bestow upon all his people, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, and be distinguished with glories proportionable to the vigour with which they have exerted themselves in his service.

12 This I say, *not as if I had already attained* to all that I wish to be, *or were already perfect;* for I am truly sensible how far I am from that perfection of character, as well as of state, which the gospel teaches me to aspire after; *but I pursue it, if* by any means *I may but* reach and *apprehend that* height of excellence *for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus,* whose condescending hand graciously laid hold on me in my mad career, in so extraordinary a manner as you have often heard, and has introduced me into that blessed race in which I am now engaged.[k]

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 *Brethren,* I repeat it again, with all unfeigned humility of heart, that *I count not myself to have attained* already, I have much nobler heights of holiness in view, and am sensible how far I fall short of them. *But one thing*[l] [*I can say,*] that herein I imitate the conduct of the racers in your

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I*

not have an absolute assurance. And he lays great stress upon the peculiarity of the phrase ἡ ἐξανάστασις ἡ ἐκ νεκρῶν, for so he would read it, according to the Alexandrian MSS. and would render it "*that peculiar resurrection which is to be* "*from among the rest of the dead.*" Flem. on the First Resur. p. 22. 82. But I thought that reading and version too precarious to be adopted here, especially as it appears to me that ἐξανάστασις is sometimes used without any such *emphasis.* Compare Mark xii. 19; Luke xx. 28; and that the more emphatical phrase, τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν, Luke xx. 35, simply signifies that resurrection of which *all* good men are to partake, and indeed the general declaration, that the *dead in Christ are to rise first,* will fully answer any thing implied in these expressions. The editors of the Prussian Testament think the Jewish teachers who opposed Paul with so much eagerness were of the sect of the Sadducees, and that he takes the more frequent notice of the *resurrection,* in opposition to their pernicious tenets in relation to it.

[k] Hath apprehended, &c.] Candidates in the Grecian games, especially when they first presented themselves, were often introduced by some person of established reputation, who, at the same time that he spoke as honourably as might be of his friend, urged him to acquit himself with the utmost vigour and resolution; and it is possible that this clause may allude to that circumstance. But I conclude that, even on this interpretation, it farther expresses the sense the apostle had of his obligations to the condescension and grace of Christ, in *pursuing* and *seizing* him while he fled from him, and so engaging him to aspire to this crown of life. Compare 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

[l] *But* this *one thing* I do.] Mr. Peirce thinks the most exact grammatical construction of these words is this, "I press "after that *one thing* for which I have "been apprehended by *Jesus Christ,* that "I may apprehend or attain it, neglect-"ing the things behind, and stretching "forward to those before, *after this one* "*thing,* I say, I press, according to the "aim I have fixed to myself, that I may "obtain the *prize* of the high calling, &c." But I think the construction may be clear enough, by supplying the words, "*I can* "*say,*" without the transposition he would attempt here.

do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

celebrated Grecian games; my thoughts and cares are all fixed upon this great object, and, *forgetting the things which are behind*, not looking back with immoderate self-complacency on the steps already taken, and the way already dispatched, *I* am concerned intensely, with all the vigour and agility I can possibly exert, to *stretch forward toward those things which are before;* SECT. VI. Phil. III. 13

14 I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And so I *pursue the goal for the* glorious *prize* which strikes my sight there; even that which is the ultimate end *of the high calling*[m] *of God*, with which he hath honoured me, by the dispensation of his grace *in Christ Jesus*;[n] and surely no calling can be more noble, or better deserve the most constant attention and most ardent pursuit. 14

IMPROVEMENT.

As it was not grievous to the apostle to repeat the same useful exhortations, when he judged it conducive to the safety and happiness of those to whom he wrote, so neither should it be grievous to us to hear or to speak truths, with which in the general we may be well acquainted, but which we may be too ready to forget, in pursuit of things, more amusing indeed, but less advantageous. Such are the truths here inculcated; familiarly known, but not therefore to be disregarded. Let us avoid all approaches to these detestable characters here branded with so just an infamy; and consider what it is that will constitute us the circumcision, the people whom God will avow for his own; and charge it upon our souls, that we worship God in the Spirit, that Ver. 1 2 3

[m] *I pursue the prize of the high calling.*] Here is all along a beautiful allusion to the Olympic games, and especially the foot-races, which made the most celebrated part of them; where the prize was placed in a very conspicuous situation, so that the competitors might be animated by having it still in their sight. Mr Dunlop considers the word βραβειον as expressing the *principal* prize, whereas some might come to the *goal*, and receive *lower* rewards; as if he had said, I labour to come in so as to secure the greatest, *i. e.* I aim at being an advanced and exemplary Christian. Dunl. Serm. Vol. II. p. 351. But I cannot recollect any secondary prize bestowed on the Olympic foot-race, (though in funeral games it was common,) nor can I suppose the apostle to refer to the *pentathletic* crown, *i. e.* the crown given to one who conquered in all the athletic exercises, though that might certainly by way of eminence be called τὸ βραβειον, *the grand prize*. See Mr. West's Dissert. on the Olympic Games, p. lxiii.

[n] *Of God in Christ Jesus.*] L'Enfant thinks the apostle compares our Lord to those who stood on an elevated place at the end of the course, calling the racers by their names, and encouraging them, by *holding out the crown*, to exert themselves with vigour. But not to insist on the uncertainty of this, it would seem at all events more rational to interpret *the high calling*, as alluding to the *proclamation* made, by which men were called before the opening of the course to contend for such and such a prize, which answers to the general declaration made in the gospel of the heavenly prize.

SECT. VI. we rejoice in Christ Jesus, and repose not in any sense confidence in the flesh.

VERSE. We see an example of this excellent temper in the apostle here, who makes his boast in Christ, and for him renounces those
4, 5 advantages on which he was once ready to set the highest value. He accounted those things but loss and damage which once he esteemed his gain and his treasure, especially that eager but blind zeal with which he had once persecuted the church. May
7 it be deeply and constantly impressed upon our minds, that the *knowledge of Christ* is of all things the *most excellent*, as the ob-
8 ject of it is most sublime and interesting, and the fruits of it most happy and important! This therefore let us pursue, and be truly solicitous that we may *gain Christ* as our own unalien-
9 able property, and that we may be *found in him*, interested in a better righteousness than we can claim, by virtue of our own personal obedience to any law; even that which is *by the faith of Christ*, the *righteousness which is of God*, prepared, exhibited, and appointed by him, and which is received *by faith* in his Son.

Who would not wish to know him in the power of his resur-
10 rection, to feel the views of that great event powerfully operating on his mind, yea, in this connection to know the fellowship of his sufferings too? Who would not be willing to be made, in the most painful sense, conformable to his death, to feel the scourges, the insults, the nails, the cross, and, what was more dreadful than all, even the desertion of the Father himself, might he thereby attain to a resemblance to Christ in a glorious resurrection
11 from the dead? It shall be the portion of all who die to sin, and live to God, and persist in a resolution of sacrificing all to that Redeemer who for us died and rose again.

In the mean time, while we are surrounded with the infirmities of mortality, may we ever keep up an humble sense of the imper-
12, 13 fection of our present attainments in religion. May we with holy Paul, so incomparably our superior, forget the progress already made, and strain every nerve, in reaching on to what yet remains before us. How far are we from *apprehending that for which we were apprehended by Jesus Christ!* How far from answering the plan our Lord has drawn, and being completely what he intended his servants should be! "Enkindle in our breasts, "O thou great *Author and Finisher of our Faith!* a more ar-"dent desire of answering it; and for that purpose, may it please "thee so to display before our believing eyes the glorious *prize* "*of the high calling* with which God has honoured us through "thee, that we may feel all the ardour of our souls awakened to "obtain it, and never slacken our pace till we win that immortal "crown, but daily increase our speed as we approach it."

SECT. VII.

The apostle urges upon the Philippians a holy and blameless temper, and a heavenly conversation, cautioning them against the bad example even of some professing Christians, who brought great detriment on themselves, and reproach upon religion, by the unsuitable manner in which they acted. Phil. III. 15, *to the end.* IV. 1.

PHILIPPIANS III. 15.

PHIL. III. 15.
LET us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you.

SECT. VII. Phil. III. 15

SUCH is the situation of my own mind, and the ardour of desire with which I am pressing after farther attainments in the Divine life. *Let as many of us therefore as are perfect* in any degree, that is, all who are sincere Christians, and initiated, if I may so express it, into the holy mysteries of our religion, *attend to this,*[a] as our great business and aim; *and if any of you are otherwise affected,* if any be unhappily fallen into a remiss and indolent frame, *God shall reveal even this unto you.*[b] I hope that he will, and I pray that he may, give you such views of the crown of glory, the prize of our high calling, as may animate your most vigorous pursuit of it. *Nevertheless*[c] (*whereunto* [*I hope*] *we*

16 Nevertheless, whereto we have al- 16

[a] *As many of us as are perfect,* &c.] The use of this phrase, in reference to those *initiated into the mysteries*, is so well known, and the allusion here seems so suitable to the connection, that I presume I need not largely vindicate the interpretation given. I shall only add, that when this expression is used to intimate, that the greatest adepts in Christianity should be labouring after higher improvements, it must strongly imply the obligation on those in a lower class to press forwards.

[b] *God shall reveal,* &c.] Mr. Fleming, in pursuance of his peculiar interpretation of ver. 11, paraphrases this verse as if he had said, "If any of you are not "persuaded of that doctrine of a first "resurrection, which is not indeed of the "utmost necessity, God may hereafter "reveal it more fully; and in the mean "time, let us aim at that common glory "which we all profess to expect at the "general resurrection." But I think if Paul had declared it as a part of the revelation he had received from Christ (and he could surely know it no otherwise than by special revelation,) it could not have been left to them as a matter of indifference, to judge one way or another of it. Dr. Whitby labours to prove that the apostle here glances on those Christians who might be ready to lay a stress on circumcision and Jewish ceremonies, with relation to which he hoped they would be better informed, which at least they would probably be after the destruction of Jerusalem. Compare Gal. v. 10; vi. 15, 16.

[c] *Nevertheless,* &c.] The construction here has some perplexity, but, on the whole, I think ὅ is to be understood as if he had said, "I could wish to animate "you to the greatest ardour in pursu-"ing the prize; however at least remember to agree in honouring the gospel as your common rule, and bearing a proper affection to each other. And if we suppose the words εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, to come in as a *parenthesis*, and to be rendered, *to which I hope we have attained*, a proper distinction will be preserved between this and the preceding verse, which have of

SECT. VII.

Phil. III. 16.

have at least *attained,) let us* act as those who are habitually persuaded of the Divine authority of the gospel, and accordingly all *walk agreeably to* what we profess to revere, as *the same* great authentic *rule* of our conduct; and *let us* especially be taught by it to *attend to the same thing*, to be one in our affections to each other, concerning which our duty is so plainly declared, that the weakest honest inquirer cannot be mistaken.

ready attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Thus I exhort you, and I hope I may appeal to all that know me, that my behaviour speaks the same language. So that I may confidently say, *Be ye*, my *brethren*, *imitators of me*, *and observe*, and endeavour to follow, *those that walk*, *as ye have us for an example*; join this company, and learn to speak and act like them.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.

18 *For* there are *many* who call themselves Christians, and yet *walk* [*in a very different manner,*] *of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping*; for well indeed may I weep on so sad an occasion, as it is certain [*that,*] whatever they may profess, [*they are*] *enemies of the cross of Christ*;[4] and as they are unwilling to suffer any thing for it, so its cause and honour suffers much by them, for they continually act contrary to the very end and design of their Master's death. Such a set of men there is, *whose* behaviour is scandalous, and their *end* [*is*] utter *destruction*. Whatever they may talk of knowing and serving the true God, they are persons *whose* chief *god* [*is*] *their* own *belly*, (compare Rom. xvi. 18.) which they continually seek to honour with the most luxurious sacrifices; persons whose taste is so mean *and* preposterous, that *they glory in* those things which are indeed *their shame*, having outgrown all the remainders of common modesty, and all sense

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and whose glory *is* in their

[illegible] been confounded. For the sense of the phrase φρονειν τα, see Phil. ii. 2, and Rom. xii. 16.

[4] *Enemies to the cross of Christ.*] The end and design of *that* being to attract our hearts from earth to heaven, such an expression may be proper in that sense though some think it refers to their aversion to persecution, understanding by the *cross of Christ*, the cross to be borne *for Christ*, I think much less properly. Nor does it seem to refer so much to their contending for Jewish ceremonies, as in general to their *immoral temper* afterwards described. It is to be feared many converts from the Gentiles, as well as from the Jews, answered this character, and if they did so, it was entirely to the apostle's purpose to reprove them.

shame, who mind earthly things.)

of decency. In a word, they are persons *who mind* only *earthly things*, all their thoughts and pursuits are taken up with visible and corporeal objects, the concerns of time and this transitory world. *But we converse as citizens of heaven*, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem, and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth. We therefore endeavour to promote the interests of that glorious society, to learn its manners, and to behave worthy of our relation to it: *from whence also we expect the* blessed appearance of our *Lord Jesus Christ* as *a Saviour*; *Who shall transform our vile body*[e], *that it may be made conformable to his glorious body*; that all the abasement and dishonour of the grave may be shaken off for ever, and we, having borne his image in holiness on earth, may bear it in beauty, glory and immortality in heaven. It is indeed a vastly surprising, and to sense an incredible change; but we ought to remember, that nothing is too hard for Omnipotence: he will therefore effect it, *according to the energy whereby he is able to subject even all things unto himself*, and which will render him completely victorious over all his enemies, even over death and the grave, the last of them. *Therefore*, let me entreat and charge you all, *my beloved and most amiable brethren, my joy* now, *and* my *crown* of rejoicing in that expected day of the Lord, that as ye have so great and important a hope, ye improve it to animate you in a vigorous adherence to that religion which inspires it; and *so stand fast in the Lord*[f], as becomes those who are so dear to him, as well as so tenderly *beloved* by me, and who expect by his grace so glorious a change.

SECT. VII.

Phil. III. 19.

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

20

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

21

IV. 1. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

IV. 1.

[e] *Transform our vile body.*] Το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων, might literally be rendered, *the body of our humiliation*, &c. that is, this body in the form of sinful flesh, humbled and degraded as it at present is, and so different from what the body of Adam originally was.

[f] *So stand fast*, &c.] There is no more reason for making this the beginning of a new chapter, than there would be for disjoining the last verse of the 1 Cor. xv. in sense exactly parallel to this, from the preceding discourse on the resurrection with which it is so beautifully and properly connected.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VII. AND do not we also look for *Christ as a Saviour?* Do we not hope that *this vile body* shall by his all-victorious power be *transformed into the likeness of his own glorious body?* Is it not with Ver. 21. this hope that we commit the dust of our friends to the grave? And is it not in this confidence that we think of our own death 20 with hope, and with cheerfulness? Why then is not our conversation more in heaven? Why have we not more frequent, solemn, and affectionate views of that better world to which we profess to be tending? Alas! have we not reason too often to weep for ourselves as well as others, that we mind earthly things so much, and heavenly no more? But wretched indeed are we 19 if we fully answer the sad character which, in professing Christians, wherever it is seen, and much more wherever it is experienced, is so justly deplorable! May Divine grace ever preserve those on whom the name of Christ is named, those by whom it is known, from making their belly their god, (how infamous a deity!) and from that wretched degeneracy of taste, and 18 perverseness of mind, which would lead them to glory in their shame! Surely the cross of Christ was intended to teach us lessons so contrary to this, that there can be no greater enmity to it than to indulge such a temper, especially while we profess to plead for that cross, and to glory in it. May we not only abhor such a temper, but bewail it! Yea may *rivers of tears run down our eyes* when we see *God's law* violated and his *gospel* profaned.

17 Blessed be God, for other and better examples in the apostolic age, and that some are likewise to be traced in our own, corrupt as it is; though they are in number less frequent, and in 16 lustre less radiant than of old! Let us however *mark those that walk, as we have Paul for an example.* How different soever our apprehensions in some things may be, may we all unite in a care of practical religion, and *whereunto we have already attained, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.* And O that our rule may be more and more attended to in every step of our way! and that if in any instance we mistake it, or if we fail in those notions we ought to have of any principle of Christianity which are to add a sanction to it, *God may reveal even this unto* Chap. iv. 1. *us*, and teach us to act in a more suitable manner! In every sense, *what we see not, may he teach us*, and *wherein we have done iniquity, may we do no more* (Job xxxiv. 32,) but *stand fast in the Lord*, and press forward with greater ardour towards every religious improvement, towards every thing which may increase the beauty of our character, and reflect a brighter honour upon our profession.

SECT. VIII.

After some particular charges relating to a pacific temper, the apostle gives more general exhortations to Christian cheerfulness, moderation, prayer, a behaviour universally amiable, and an imitation of the good example he had endeavoured to give them. Phil. IV. 2—9.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 2.

PHIL. IV. 2.
I BESEECH Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

I HAVE been exhorting you all to stand fast in the Lord, being supported by those glorious hopes he has given you. And *I* must now particularly *beseech Euodia, and beseech Syntyche that*, whatever cause of difference may have arisen between them, *they* would sacrifice all to the common engagements of their Christian profession, and *would attend to the same thing in the Lord:* that they would turn all their thoughts into that one channel, and only consider how they may most effectually promote the great purposes of their common calling. *And I* 3 *also beseech thee* [*my*] *genuine associate*,[a] whose intimate friendship supersedes the necessity of naming thee particularly, *that thou wouldst assist those* pious *women who laboured with me in the gospel*,[b] in such services as suited their sex and station, and assisted *with Clemens also and my other fellow-labourers, whose names*, as I have reason in charity to hope [*are*] *in the book of*

SECT. VIII.
Phil. IV. 2

3 And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

[a] My *genuine associate; συζυγε γνησιε.*] Some understand and render συζυγε, as a proper name, *the true zygus*; but as I do not remember any instance in which γνησιος is used merely to signify *true* or *honest*, it must, even on that interpretation, refer to the signification of the name. As if he had said, *Thou art zygus indeed*, the literal import of which is undoubtedly, according to our version, *yoke-fellow*; but as that word in English is generally appropriated to *conjugal life*, and yet, as it stands in the original, is *masculine*, and consequently (waving all other arguments) cannot be taken in that sense, I thought it better to render it *associate*. I think it probable this might be an officer of considerable authority and dignity in the church at Philippi, perhaps husband to one of the pious women here mentioned.

[b] *Women—who laboured.*] As women's preaching was so expressly forbidden by Paul, we must conclude it was in some other way that these good women were helpful to him in the gospel; not so much by ministering to his person, though that no doubt they were ready to do, as they had opportunity, but by such kind of services as I have intimated in the improvement, and by the intelligence they might give him of the state of religion among their female acquaintance, their children, or other branches of their respective families.

SECT. VIII.

life,[c] and will there appear to their everlasting honour and joy, though I do not stay to enumerate them here.

Phil. IV. 4

I am now drawing toward a close, and let this be my farewell. Whatever difficulties and persecutions may attend you, *rejoice always in the Lord*; endeavour to maintain an habitual joy in Christ, and in the hopes and privileges you derive from him. And *again I say, Rejoice.* I renew the exhortation, as the honour of our Divine Master and your own comfort so much depends on attending to it.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

5 *Let your moderation* and gentleness, both in the pursuits of the various enjoyments of life, and in supporting the injuries and indignities you may meet with, *be known unto all men*, as visible in the whole of your behaviour; for *the Lord* [*is*] *at hand.* He will quickly come to close the scene, and to put an end to all your temporal enjoyments, and all you can suffer from your enemies. In the mean time, whatever necessities, or whatever oppressions, may arise, *be anxious about nothing*, so as to disquiet or distress your minds, *but in every thing* that occurs, in every condition, and on every occasion, *let your petitions be made known*, and breathed out *before God, in* humble *prayer, and* fervent *supplication*,[d] to be still mingled *with thanksgiving*, as there is always room for praise, and always occasion for it, even in circumstances of the greatest affliction and distress.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

7 *And*, if you exercise such a temper, *the peace* which the blessed Spirit *of God* diffuses over the souls of his people, that peace, *which far surpasses all understanding*,[e] which none can conceive

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understand-

[c] *Whose names are in the book of life.*] The names of good men are often represented as *registered in heaven*, compare Mal. iii. 16. Where any thing of such a character appeared, it was reasonable, in the judgment of charity, to hope *this* with respect to the persons in whom it was found; but we have no reason to conclude from this expression, that Paul had any *particular* revelation with regard to these friends he here mentions as certainly destined to salvation.

[d] *Prayer and supplication.*] The particular difference between προσευχη and δεησις cannot I think be ascertained, though some understand by the former, *petition for good*, and by the latter, *deprecation of evil.* Perhaps the latter may be rather more expressive than the former, as implying more earnest importunity; and this sense the word *supplication* seems to carry with it.

[e] *The peace of God, &c.*] By this expression some understand, that *pacific disposition* which the gospel requires, interpreting the following phrase, either of its *excelling* all merely *intellectual* endowments (as if it were parallel to 1 Cor.

Phil. IV. 7.

ing, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

but he who feels it, and which none can feel but by Divine communication, *shall guard* and defend *your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*, so that nothing shall be able to break in upon that sweet and sacred tranquillity. *As for* 8 *what remains*, my *brethren*, let me dispatch it in a few words. Be always intent on raising your characters to the greatest height you possibly can: *whatever things are true* and sincere, *whatever things* [*are*] grave and *venerable*,[1] *whatever things* [*are*] righteous and *equitable*, *whatever things* [*are*] chaste and *pure*, *whatever things* [*are*] *friendly* and kind,[2] *whatever things* [*are*] reputable and truly ornamental, *if* [*there be*] *any* real *virtue* in them, *and if* [*there be*] *any* just *praise* resulting from them, *think* frequently *of these things*, consider what they are, how highly you are obliged to regard them, and endeavour more and more to abound in the practice of them. *And*, for a farther illustration 9 and confirmation of this advice, I will add, *whatever things ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me*, whatever good lessons I have given you, whatever worthy of imitation, you may have observed in my conduct, while I abode among you, or may have since been credibly informed of, *these things* be ye ever careful to *practise*; *and the God of peace shall* always *be with you*: for I have the testimony of my conscience, that my conduct has always been

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

xiii. 2.) or of its *ruling* the other powers of the soul, as ἐπιγραφω is said to signify *having dominion*; Dan. vii. 22; ix. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 13. Compare Rom. xiii. 1. But this is only a *branch* of that temper which we are to cultivate, if we desire that sense of peace and reconciliation with God, of which it is most natural to interpret this clause, as that excellent preacher, Mr. Du Mant, has shewn at large in his valuable discourse on this text. See his Serm. p. 307, &c. Thus *the peace of Christ*, John xiv. 27, signifies the peace which he gives, or of which he is the author. For the emphasis of the word *possess*, see the note on 1 Pet. v. 5.

[1] *Grave and venerable.*] The word σεμνος is rendered *grave*, and σεμνοτης, *gravity*, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11; Tit. ii. 1, 2, 7. Dr. Lardner has very well expressed the design of the exhortation when he says, "That it is to recommend to "Christians a concern for their character, a care so to behave as to secure to "themselves some degree of respect and "esteem: that they should avoid unbecoming levity in word, action, habit, "and outward behaviour; which tends "to render men despicable; and makes "them appear weak, mean, and of no "consequence in the eyes of others." Lardner's Serm. p. 319. And I hope it will be remembered how particularly this gravity is recommended to ministers in the places cited above.

[2] *Friendly and kind.*] This seems the more exact import of προσφιλη than *lovely*, though there is certainly a *lovely charm* in such *friendly* things.

SECT. VIII. pleasing in his sight, and that your imitation of it will be the way to engage the Divine presence and blessing, which I most heartily wish you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 3. How condescending is this great apostle in the kind notice he takes, not only of his fellow-labourers in the work of the Christian ministry, but even of the women, who, according to the opportunity which God gave them, lent their assistance for the service of the gospel, whatever their assistance were; whether by their prayers, or their familiar addresses to their friends, or their kind offices to the bodies of those in distress, or that uniform example by which the several virtues of Christianity were recommended, and the Christian profession adorned! Let none then object the privacy of their stations, as if that must necessarily cut them off from usefulness, but let them endeavour diligently and humbly to do their utmost, and pray for increasing wisdom and grace, to guide them in their deliberations and resolves.

2 It will be very subservient to this happy design, that Christians in whatever stations they are, should *be of one mind in the Lord*; that they should endeavour to lay aside mutual prejudices, and unite in love if they cannot perfectly agree in all their sen-
4 timents. Then may they *rejoice in the Lord*; and it is to be urged upon them again and again, that they do so. It is to be urged, not only as a privilege but a duty. And surely, if we consider what a Saviour he is, and how perfectly accommodated to what our necessities require, and what our hearts could wish, we shall easily enter into the reasonableness of the exhortation.

5 Let us often represent it to ourselves as a truth equally important and certain, that *the Lord is at hand*. By his spiritual presence he is ever near us, and the day of his final and visible appearance is continually approaching. Let our hearts be duly influenced by it, and particularly be taught that holy moderation which becomes those who see the season so nearly advancing, when *all these things shall be dissolved*. And let this abate our
6 anxiety about them. Why should we be solicitous about things which shall so soon be as if they had never been? Let us seek the repose of our minds in prayer. In every thing, by humble supplication let us make known our requests unto God. And let us mingle thankful acknowledgments for past favours, with our addresses to the throne of grace for what we farther need.
7 This will establish the serenity of our souls, so that *the peace of God*, more sweet and delightful than any who have not experienced it can conceive, *will keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus*, and make our state secure as well as pleasant.

8 Let us study the beautiful and the venerable, as well as what

is true and just in actions, and pursue every thing which shall, as such, approve itself to our consciences, every thing in which there shall be virtue and praise. Let us always in this view endeavour to keep the moral sense uncorrupted, and pray that God would, if I may be allowed the expression, preserve the delicacy of our mind in this respect, that a holy sensibility of soul may warn and alarm us, to guard against every distant appearance of evil. That so cautious of venturing to the utmost boundaries of what may be innocent, we may be more secure than we could otherwise be, from the danger of passing over to the confines of guilt, and of wandering from one degree of it to another. And while we exhort others to such a care, let us ourselves endeavour to be like this holy apostle, among the brighter examples of it. SECT. VIII. Verse 9

SECT. IX.

The apostle concludes with his acknowledgments to the Philippians for the liberal supply they had sent him; at the same time speaking of the independency of temper to which Divine grace had brought him: and transmits Christian salutations from himself and his friends at Rome. Phil. IV. 10,—*to the end.*

PHILIPPIANS IV. 10.

PHIL. IV. 10. BUT I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

BUT to return to my own affairs, and your conduct to me. *I have rejoiced greatly in the Lord* Jesus Christ,[a] to whose providence and grace I ultimately ascribe it, *that your* affectionate *care of me has now* sprung up *again* and *flourished*, like vegetables which, after having seemed during the winter to be dead in the earth, sprout up at the returning spring with new beauty and pleasure. *With respect to which, you were indeed careful before*, as I assuredly believe, *but ye wanted* that convenient *opportunity* which the coming of Epaphroditus gave you, of transmitting to me the fruit of your liberality and bounty. But I would *not* have you think *that I* || *speak with respect to want*, as if I was impatient of that, or meant to extort any thing from you, if future necessities should arise, as by dint of importunity. *For* I bless God, I have no need SECT. IX. Phil. IV. 10.

|| Not that I speak in respect of want:

[a] *Rejoiced greatly in the Lord.*] This shews the deep sense the apostle entertained of the providential interposition of Christ, in the seasonable supply he had received from the Philippians; and many other traces of this kind appear in the writings of St. Paul.

SECT. IX. Phil. IV. 12.

of betaking myself to such low expedients, as *I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be contented. I know both* [*how*] *to be abased,* when it pleases God to humble me, *and I know* [*how*] *to abound,* when his providence appears for my supply. *In every* [*place*] *and in all* [*conditions*] *I am instructed,* and find myself, as it were, initiated into this great mystery,[b] so needful to the Christian, and especially the apostolic life, *both to be fed plentifully* without transgressing the rules of temperance, *and to suffer hunger* without murmuring or discontent. I know how *both to abound,* without too fond an attachment to the world, when my circumstances in it are most easy, *and to fall short* of the agreeable accommodations of life, yea, and to be in necessity, without being greatly disturbed at such a change, or feeling any painful anxiety on ac-
13 count of it. In one word, whatever is to be done, whatever is to be borne, *I am sufficient for all things;* have vigour enough for the one, have patience and fortitude enough for the other: but then I would not be understood to arrogate any thing of this to myself, but would most humbly and affectionately acknowledge, that it is all *through Christ who enables me,* and furnishes my spirit with a strength of which it is naturally destitute.

14 You see by this, that the happiness of my life doth not depend upon any external circumstance, nor any supply I can receive from my most generous friends. *Nevertheless, ye did well in communicating* so liberally *to my* relief, in that *affliction* under which I am now suffering; as it is certain the servants of Christ are not less
15 worthy of being regarded and assisted by you, for those attainments which by his grace they have been enabled to make in the temper which their profession demands. And in this respect, I am under peculiar obligations to you, my dear brethren, *for ye, O Philippians, well know, that*

for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

12 I know both *how* to be abased, and I know *how* to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

14 Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction.

15 Now, ye Philippians, know also

[b] Initiated, &c.] This is well known to be the peculiar sense of μυεισθαι, and it has a spirit here which I could not persuade myself to suppress, as the apostle, by the choice of this word, seems to intimate to every Greek reader how much he esteemed these good dispositions of mind here spoken of, beyond all their boasted *initiations*, whatever *mysteries* they might be supposed to contain.

SECT. IX.

Phil. IV. 15.

that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

in the beginning of our mission; when we came and preached *the gospel* among you, *as I was departing from Macedonia*[c] (which is now about twelve years ago[d],) *no church communicated with me in the affair of giving and receiving*, that is, no Christian society, as such, made any collection for my personal support and assistance, *but you only: For*, not contented with ministering to my necessities, while I was with you; *even* when I resided *in Thessalonica*, though it was so considerable a city, and the metropolis of your country, and though the gospel was so affectionately received by some there, yet *you sent* thither *once and again to* the relief of *my necessity*[e].

16 For even in Thessalonica, ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

16

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

I mention this in so particular a manner, *not because I desire a gift*, or would extort any future favour from you, by the recollection of the past, *but* this *I desire*, *that* in such ways, as may be most for the honour of God, and the credit of your profession, *fruit may abound, to your* comfortable *account* in the day of the Lord.

17

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

At present you need not be solicitous about me, *for I have all* I can wish to make my bonds sit easy upon me, *and* do indeed *abound* more than usual in the convenient accommodations of life: *I am full, having received by Epaphroditus your present*, which I cannot but esteem as *a fragrant odour, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God*, to whose glory it is, I know, ultimately devoted, while for his sake you are so ready to relieve his ministers.

18

19 But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

And I have the pleasure to think you will not on the whole be losers by such liberalities, *but* that *my God*, graciously smiling upon your tribute of grateful love, *will supply all your wants, according to his* inexhaustible *riches*, which he cannot but possess who is seated *in* supreme *glory* and ma-

19

[c] *As I was departing*, &c.] So I think it best to render ἐξελθόντι, because both Philippi and Thessalonica (ver. 16.) lay in Macedonia, and no translation can be more literal.

[d] *About twelve years ago.*] This epistle (as we have observed in the introduction) seems to have been written towards the end of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about A. D. 63: and he first preached at Philippi about the year 51.

[e] *In my necessity.*] It appears by 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 7—9, that it was not to the liberality of the inhabitants of that city, but chiefly to the labour of his own hands, that Paul owed his subsistence during his abode among them.

SECT. IX. Phil. IV. 19.

jesty above, and scatters down not merely the blessings of providence, but of grace, *by Christ Jesus*, which I hope he will largely impart to you.

20 *Now to our God and Father*, to him whom we are encouraged to regard under that endearing character, and in whom, through the great Redeemer, we are daily rejoicing, [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

20 Now unto God and our Father, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 I will not swell my postscript by a long catalogue of names, but desire you to *salute every saint in Christ Jesus;* and to assure them all, known or unknown, that they are dear to me, and that, in general or particular petitions, I bear them always upon my heart. *The brethren who are with me*, my dear fellow-labourers, with whom I most frequently converse, *salute you*, sincerely wishing your prosperity and peace. And not only these brethren, who sojourn with me, and bear a part in the ministerial work,

21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

22 but *All the* other *saints* here at Rome *salute you*[1], *but especially they of Cesar's household*, who, sensible of the goodness of God to them, in causing his grace to visit them, and dwell with them in such a situation, have a particular regard for their brethren every where, and desire to be particularly remembered to you.

22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.

23 To conclude all with the best wishes my most endeared love can form for you, *may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the sanctifying and comfortable influences of his Spirit, [*be*] *with you all*, now and at all times, to support you under all your trials, and to animate you to persevere even unto the end! *Amen.*

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

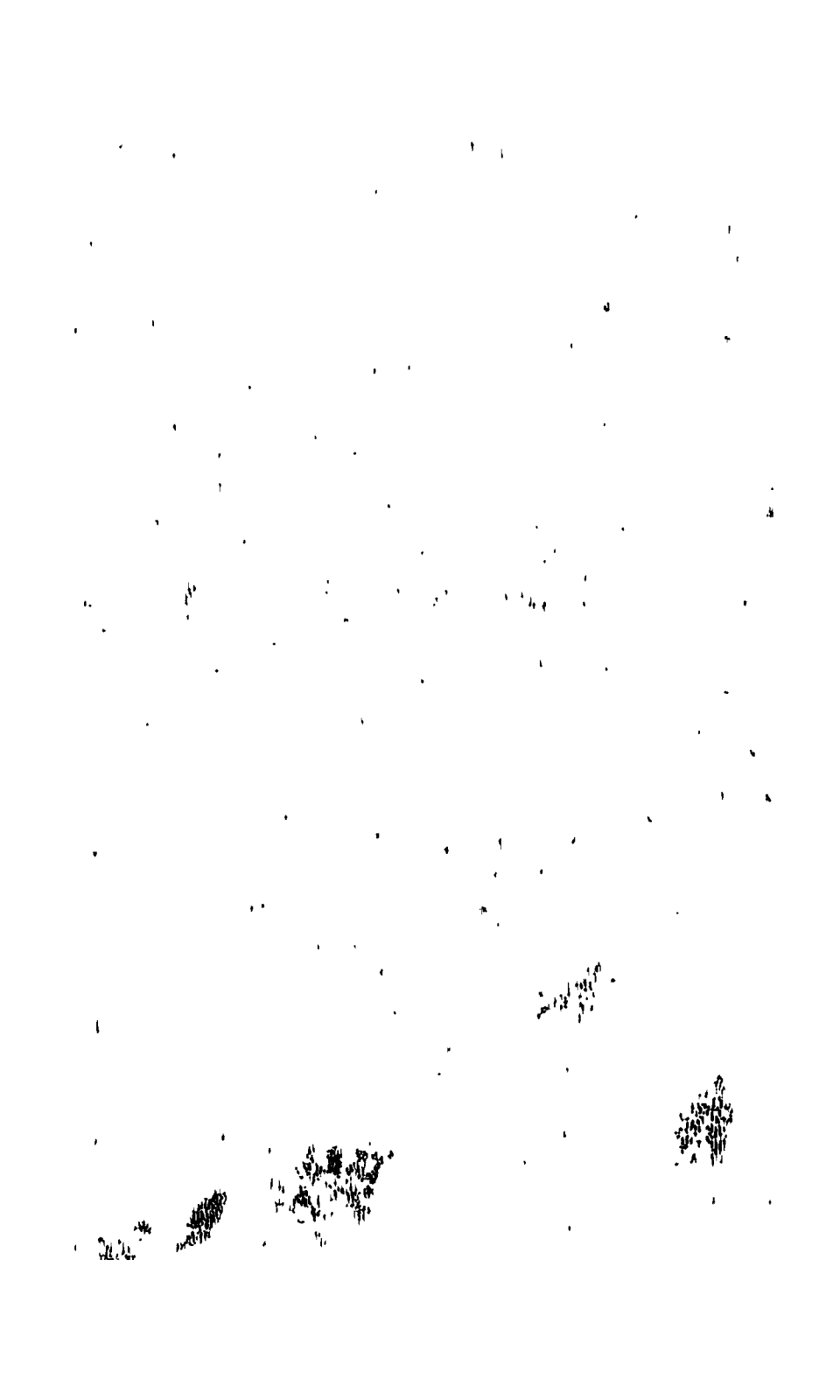
WHAT a noble spirit of generosity and gratitude appears in the apostle! How handsomely does he acknowledge the favour of his friends, still maintaining the dignity of his character, rejoicing in the tokens of their affection to him, chiefly as fruits abounding to their account, and as it would be a sweet savour acceptable to God. And surely the incense which they were

[1] *The brethren*—and *all the saints salute you.*] From this distinction I conclude, with Mr. Peirce, that it is highly probable the *ministers* at Rome were called by the name of *brethren*. Peirce's Vindic. p. 526.

presenting at the Divine altar, would also by its fragrancy delight them, surely they enjoyed what they had of their own, whether it were more or less, with greater satisfaction, when they were imparting something with filial gratitude to their Father in Christ, to make his bonds and imprisonment the less grievous. SECT. IX.

The apostle freely professes, that he received these tokens of their affection with pleasure; but much happier was he in that noble superiority of mind to external circumstances which he so amiably describes. Truly rich, and truly great, in knowing *how to be content* in every circumstance; possessed of the noblest kind of *learning*, in having *learned how to be exalted*, and *to be abased*, *to abound* or to *suffer need*. This all-sufficiency, of which he boasts, is it haughty arrogance? far from it: he is never humbler than when he speaks of himself in this exalted language. It is in the strength of another that he glories. *I am sufficient for all things through Christ which strengthens me.* And here the feeblest Christian may join issue with him, and say, "if *Christ* will "strengthen me, *I also am sufficient for all.*" His grace therefore let us constantly seek, and endeavour to maintain a continual dependence upon it, praying for ourselves, and for each other, that *the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* may be *with us*. This grace produced and maintained saints, where of all places upon earth, we should least have expected to find them, even in the palace of Cæsar, of Nero. Let it encourage us to look to God to *supply our* spiritual *necessities out of the riches of his glory in Christ*. And, in a cheerful hope that he will do it, let us through *him* ascribe *glory to our God and Father for ever and ever. Amen.* Verse 11, 12 13 23 22 19 20

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.



THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

COLOSSIANS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE was a large populous city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, and stood not far from Laodicea: but though it appears from this epistle, that a Christian church was established in it, we have no account by whom, or at what time, it was founded. Some have concluded, from chap. ii. 1, that St. Paul had never been there himself; but though perhaps nothing can be certainly inferred from that passage in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, that if the apostle had been personally concerned in the first preaching of the gospel there, so important a fact would not have been entirely omitted in the history of the Acts. It is not however at all improbable, but they might be converted while Paul resided at Ephesus, especially considering that he spent no less than three years in that city, and preached with so much success, that St. Luke tells us, (Acts xix. 20.) that *all they who dwelt in* Asia *heard the word of the Lord, both* Jews *and* Greeks.

As to the date of this epistle, little need be added here, after what has been already observed in the Introduction to the Ephesians, (p. 89.) It appears highly probable, for reasons there given, that it was wrote at the same time with that to the Ephesians, and they were both sent together by Tychicus and Onesimus,

towards the close of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, which was about the year of our Lord 63, or the ninth of the emperor Nero. (Compare chap. iv. 3, 7, 9. See also Vol. III. § 60 note [s], p. 401.)

The Colossians appear, from several passages in this epistle, to have borne an honourable character for their piety, and the zeal they discovered for the gospel; but we find, from the cautions the apostle gives them in the second chapter, that they were in some danger of being drawn aside by the subtleties of the Heathen philosophers, and the insinuations of some Jewish zealots, who insisted upon the necessity of conforming to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Accordingly the grand design of this epistle is to excite the Colossians by the most persuasive arguments to a temper and behaviour worthy their sacred character, and to secure them from the influence of those Pagan sophists, or Jewish bigots, who would seduce them from the purity of the Christian faith.

In pursuance of this general plan, the apostle, having joined Timothy's name with his own in the inscription of the epistle, begins with expressing his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and giving them a share in the important blessings of the gospel; at the same time declaring the great satisfaction with which he heard of their faith and love, and assuring them of his constant prayers, that they might receive larger supplies of Divine wisdom and grace, to enable them to walk worthy of their high character and hopes as Christians, (chap. i. 1—14.)—And, to make them more sensible of the excellence of this new dispensation into which they were admitted, he represents to them in very sublime terms, the dignity of our Saviour's Person, as the image of God, the Creator of all things, and the Head of the church; whose death God was pleased to appoint as the means of abolishing the obligation of the Mosaic law, which separated between the Jews and Gentiles, and of reconciling sinners to himself, ver. 15—23.—From this view of the excellency of Christ's Person, and the riches of redeeming grace, the apostle takes occasion to express the cheerfulness

with which he suffered in the cause of the gospel, and his earnest solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; assuring them that he felt the most tender concern both for them and the other Christians in the neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the Christian faith, ver. 24. to the end. Chap. ii. 1—7.

Having given these general exhortations, the apostle proceeds to caution the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of the gospel, either by Pagan philosophy, or Jewish tradition, reminding them of the obligation their baptism laid them under of submitting to Christ, as the only Lawgiver and Head of his church; who had totally abolished the ceremonial law, and discharged them from any farther regard to it, ver. 8—19.—And, since upon embracing Christianity they were to consider themselves as dead with respect to any other religious profession, he shews the absurdity of being still subject to the appointments of the Mosaic law; and cautions them against those corrupt additions to Christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising. And, as the most effectual means for their security, he exhorts them, as they were risen with Christ, to keep their thoughts fixed on him as the Lord and life, and on that better world whither he was ascended, and to which they had the prospect of being admitted, ver. 20, to the end. Chap. iii. 1—4.—From this glorious hope, the apostle presses them to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, covetousness, falsehood, and whatever was inconsistent with the purity of that new dispensation into which they were entered: and exhorts them to abound in the practice of meekness, forbearance, humility, and love, and to accustom themselves to those devout exercises and evangelical views which would have the most direct tendency to improve the Christian temper, ver. 5—17.

After these general precepts, the apostle proceeds to recommend to the Colossians, such a care in discharging the duties correspondent to the several relations of life

as would be most honourable to their Christian profession, and particularly enumerates those of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. And, to assist them in the performance of these duties, he exhorts them to be constant in prayer; and, for the credit of their religion, advises them to maintain a prudent obliging behaviour to their Gentile brethren, ver. 18, to the end. Chap. iv. 1—6.

The apostle closes his epistle with recommending to them Tychicus and Onesimus, of whom he speaks in very honourable terms, and to whom he refers them for a more particular account of the state of the church at Rome: and, having inserted salutations from Aristarchus, Epaphras, their minister (who was then with Paul,) and others, he gives directions for reading his epistle at Laodicea, addresses a solemn admonition to Archippus, and concludes with his salutation, wrote with his own hand, ver. 7, to the end.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

SECT. I.

The apostle begins his epistle to the Colossians with declaring his thankfulness to God for calling them into his church, and his desire in general, that they might receive an abundance of Divine grace, to enable them to walk worthy of so great a privilege. Col. I. 1—14.

COLOSSIANS I. 1.

Col. I. 1. PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother,

I *PAUL*[a], who have the honour to be *an apostle of Jesus Christ*, not having intruded myself into the office, but being called to it *by the will of God*, who was pleased to display the sovereignty of his grace in choosing me, one of the greatest of sinners, to so high *and* holy an office, do now join with *Timothy*, *a* faithful *brother*, and fellow-labourer in the gospel-

2 To the saints ministry in sending this epistle, *To the holy* 2

SECT. I. Col. I. 1.

[a] *Paul.*] It may be as proper here as elsewhere to observe, that many critics have thought this Greek name was taken by the apostle instead of that of *Saul*, though it had been the name of the first Jewish king, who was also a Benjamite (which might be a farther recommendation of it in this instance;) out of special regard to the Gentiles, to whose service he was so peculiarly devoted.

SECT. 1. Col. 1. 2.

and faithful brethren[b] *in Christ*, who are resident *at Colosse* and the adjacent places; heartily wishing *grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom he owns that relation to us, and sends down upon us the blessings of providence and grace.

and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse, grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I may say it in my own name, and that of my dear brother Timothy, though not personally acquainted with you, that *we* do unfeignedly *give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*[c] upon your account, and that we are *always praying for you;* very frequently making express mention of you before the throne of Divine grace, and habitually wishing your advancement in religion, and your eternal salva-

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you;

4 tion. *Having heard*, with unspeakable pleasure *of your* sincere *faith in Christ Jesus* our Lord, *and* active generous *love towards all the saints* who are partakers with you in that holy calling which God hath given us by him, whe-

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints;

5 ther they be Jews or Gentiles; On this account we offer our prayers to God, and we are blessing him *for the* better *hope*[d], *which is laid up for you in the heavens*, and which will in due time be accomplished, *of which ye have heard before* to such happy purpose, *in the true* and infallible *word of the gospel*, which was preach-

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel:

[b] *Holy and faithful brethren.* I cannot think they are called *holy* and *faithful* here, only or chiefly on account of their adhering to the purity of the Christian faith, in opposition to those that urged the necessity of observing the Jewish law. This was indeed one instance of their fidelity, but I think it greatly impoverishes and debases the sense of such an extensive phrase to reduce it within such narrow bounds. Many scores of criticisms in some modern commentators of reputation are liable to the same exception; but I rather choose to leave it to the reader's observation, than to stay to point out every example of it. As the epistle is inscribed to a society by profession separated from the world and consecrated to God, it was reasonably to be hoped, in the judgment of charity, most of them answered that profession, which sufficiently justifies such an address.

[c] *To the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, &c.] Some would render it, *to God even the Father*, which would be much more tolerable than our translation, *to God and the Father*, as if they were different persons. But it may seem that the prefixing the article only *to God τω θεω και πατρι*, not merely warrants but demands this rendering. Franckius has a good observation here, which illustrates the beauty of many scriptures. The order that would seem most *artificial* is transposed to make the sense *plainer*. It is not *having heard of your faith I bless God*, but *vice versa*. The same observation may be applied to ver. 9—11.

[d] *For the hope*, &c.] There is an ambiguity in the connection of this clause; it may either signify, that the apostle gives thanks *for this their hope*, supposing the 4th verse to come in as a parenthesis; or it may more directly refer to the immediately preceding words, and intimate that a *partnership* in this blessed *hope cemented* the hearts of these good men. In either sense the connection is instructive, but I prefer the former as more natural

ed among you in all its genuine purity and integrity: Of that gospel *which hath* now, through the singular goodness of God to the Gentiles whom he seemed so long to have neglected, *appeared unto you, even as in all the world*[e]; being intended for an universal religion. *And* accordingly it proceeds in its progress, and *bringeth forth* substantial *fruit* elsewhere, *as also* [*it hath done*] *among you, from the day in which ye have heard and known the grace of God, in* that saving word of solid *truth*[f] and everlasting life which hath been sent unto you.

SECT. I.

Col. I. 6.

6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:

10 That ye might walk worthy of the

7 *As ye have also learnt* it *from Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant* in the work of the Lord, *who is the faithful minister of Christ for your sakes*, whom he has appointed to labour among you, and to preside over you; *Who hath also manifested to us your* Christian *love in the* bonds 8 of that one *Spirit* who unites all our hearts. *Therefore we also, from the day that we* first 9 *heard* [*of it*], *cease not to pray for you, and to offer up our* most earnest and affectionate *requests, that ye may be* abundantly *filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*[g], in the right apprehension of spiritual objects, wrought and increased in you by the influence of the Divine Spirit upon your minds: *That so you may* be animated to *walk* 10 in a manner *worthy of* that connection in which you stand with *the Lord* Jesus Christ[h], and the obligations you are under *to* him, conducting

[e] *In all the world.*] In all the provinces of the Roman empire, as the phrase often signifies, and it may no doubt be put for many or most of them.

[f] *The grace of God in truth.*] Some understand *truth* as expressive of *substance*, in opposition to the comparative *shadows* of the Mosaic law.

[g] *Wisdom and spiritual understanding.*] It is exceedingly difficult to affix any exactly distinct ideas, to the words *wisdom, knowledge*, and *understanding*. Some explain *wisdom*, as expressing an *acquaintance with gospel mysteries*; and *understanding*, as implying *prudence in conduct*, while others invert this interpretation. It is evident to me, that the same idea is not invariably annexed to them in all places; for *knowledge* is sometimes used to express something in degree at least *inferior to wisdom*, 1 Cor. xii. 8; whereas here it evidently *includes wisdom*; and the clause *spiritual understanding* seems to be explicatory of the wisdom here spoken of, and not expressive of any thing different from it.

[h] *That ye may walk worthy of the Lord.*] The apostle seems here most pathetically to propose the great subject and design of this epistle, which was chiefly intended to excite them to a temper and behaviour worthy their Christian character. And this, indeed, is the leading view, in all the epistles of this excellent apostle, and the want of regard to so obvious a key has led many into subtilties of interpretation, which have had no foundation but in their own ingenious reveries.

SECT. I. Col. I. 10.

yourselves in *all* respects so as may be well *pleasing* in his sight, *fruitful and increasing* still more and more abundantly *in every good work, to the* practical *acknowledgment of God*, in all his attributes and relations to you. *Being* inwardly *strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power*, that you may be formed *to all* the most exemplary degrees of *patience*, under the persecution you meet with in the world, *and long-suffering*[i] under all provocations; which I wish you may be enabled to bear, not only with composure and dignity of spirit, but *with joy* too, while you expect that blessed and exalted hope which the gospel sets before you. Yes, my brethren, I desire, that instead of lamenting the calamities to which so holy a profession exposes us, you may be continually *giving thanks to the Father* of all grace and mercy, who hath called us all, whether originally Jews or Gentiles, into the communion of his church, and *who hath*, by the renewing and sanctifying influences of his Spirit upon our hearts, *made us*, though naturally so much indisposed for it, now to become *fit for a part in the inheritance*[k], which he hath prepared and assigned as the final reward and felicity *of the saints*; who, when they have passed through the dark scenes which Providence has allotted them here, shall remain *in* immortal *light* and glory. You, we reckon it our perpetual duty to render these acknowledgments to him *who hath*, by the declarations of his gospel and the influences of his grace, *rescued us from the power of darkness*[l], *and transferred*

Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.

12 Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated

[i] *Long-suffering.*] See note[e] on Rom. ii. 4. Vol. IV. p. 24.

[k] *Part in the inheritance.*] Μερίδα κληρου is the *proportion of an inheritance* which falls by lot to each of those among whom it is divided; alluding, as Dr. Whitby supposes, to the manner in which the land of Canaan was cantoned out to the tribes. Dr. Scott endeavours to shew, that the phrase *saints in light*, particularly refers to the *lustre* of the *glorified body* of the saints, who shall be clothed after the resurrection with a visible lucid glory resembling that of the *Shechinah*. Scott's Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 198, 199.

[l] *Rescued us from the power of darkness.*] Many have thought that the apostle speaks of himself as one of the Gentile converts; but we have great reason to believe, that when Divine grace made him sensible of what he had been in his Pharisaical state, while a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, he saw himself to have been under the *power of darkness*, as Christ represents those of the Jews to have been, who, influenced by the *spirit of darkness*, were combined against him. Luke xxii. 53. Yet none can doubt, but that the ignorance and sin, confusion and misery, which reigned in the Gentile world, was also in the apostle's thoughts when he used this expression.

us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins.

[*us*] from the territories of Satan, the prince of it, *into the* glorious and happy *kingdom of his beloved Son: In whom we have* ample *redemption*, from the tyranny of all our enemies, and from the destruction with which the Divine justice threatened us, *by* the pouring forth of *his blood*, [*even*] *the remission of sins*, for which we were ourselves incapable of making any satisfaction, and which, if they had not been thus expiated, would have sunk us down to final condemnation and despair.

SECT. I. Col. I. 14.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see in this epistle, as in all the rest, the most genuine discoveries of the real temper of the apostle. The same views which he had opened upon other churches, the same kind sentiments which he had expressed towards them, does he here discover and express; still glorying in his office as an apostle of Christ; still wishing to his Christian brethren, grace and peace, as beyond all comparison the best of blessings; still congratulating them on their *faith in Christ*; and *love to each other*; still making continual *mention of them in his prayers*, and recommending them to the grace of God, in which we, as they, continue to stand.

Verse 1, 2 3, 4

For ever adored be the Divine goodness, that the *word of God*, which sets before us an *hope laid up in the heavens*, hath been *manifested unto us and to all the world!* Let us often examine ourselves as to the fruit it hath brought forth in our own hearts and lives. Let us be solicitous for ourselves and others, that we may in a more spiritual and intelligent manner be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all its compass and extent, so far as he has been pleased to reveal it; and that this knowledge may produce in us the most substantial effects, so as to engage us to walk worthy of the Lord, whose name we bear, and in a manner which he may behold with approbation and pleasure; being fruitful and increasing more and more in every good work, that our barrenness may not reproach our profession, and that the great vital truths of Christianity may not seem to be dead or dormant in our hearts.

5 6 9 10

To give them their full energy on our souls, we need the operation of God's glorious and mighty power, by which they may not only be established in all patient long-suffering, but inspired with holy joy. Then shall we breathe forth lively acknowledgments to the Father, who hath revealed unto us that glorious inheritance which he distributes amongst the saints in light, even that kingdom where they all reign in everlasting purity, friendship and joy. May he prepare us to receive our lot, and take up our abode there! For this end did he rescue us from the power

11 12 13

SECT. I.

of darkness, and call us to the external privileges of those who constitute the kingdom of his dear Son: for this did he set before us that redemption which we have in his blood, even the
Ver. 14 remission of our sins. And O! how inexcusable shall we be, if we make ourselves the slaves of sin, while we have our abode in the visible kingdom of Christ; and trampling upon his blood,
10 and the act of grace which is established in it, seal ourselves up under a guilt never to be removed; a guilt heightened to infinite degrees of provocation and malignity by the very methods which have been taken to expiate it!

SECT. II.

To promote their thankfulness for their part in the gospel, and engage their adherents to it in its greatest purity, the apostle represents to them the dignity of our blessed Redeemer's person, and the methods he hath taken to make reconciliation for sinners. Col. I. 15—23.

COLOSSIANS I. 15.

SECT. II.

Col. I. 15.

I HAVE just been speaking to you of that redemption which we have in the blood of Christ, even the remission of our sins; and I must now lead you more attentively to reflect *who* he is to whom we are under such immense obligations. And you will find his dignity and glory to be such, that you can never conceive of any thing adequate to them. For he *is* indeed *the* brightest and most express *image of the invisible* and eternal *God*,[a] whom no man hath seen at any time, nor can see; [*and*] *the first-born of the whole creation*;[b] existing before it, and begotten to inherit it as the great Heir of all.
16 And his nature has a transcendent excellency,

COL. I. 15.

WHO is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature.

16 For by him

[a] *The image of the invisible—God.*] It is surprising to observe how expressly Philo the Jew, in more places than one, calls the Logos, or word of which he speaks, the *image* of God. See Dr. Scott's Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 559.

[b] *The First-born of the whole creation.*] Mr. Fleming would render πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως, *the first Creator*, or Producer, *of every creature*. Mr. Pierce observes, πρωτοτοκος sometimes signifies *the dam that produces its first birth*, and then the sense would be, He who, as it were, at the first-birth, by the exertion of his creating power, brought forth all things. It is certain that Christ is often called God's First-born, his *First-begotten*, and his *Only-begotten* Son. Psal. lxxxix. 27; Rom. viii. 29; Heb. i. 6; John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9; and therefore I did not think it warrantable to change our translation of that word; though πασης κτισεως so naturally signifies *the whole creation*, and that version seems to give so much nobler and more determinate a sense, than *every creature*, that I could have no doubt as to the reasonableness of preferring it.

SECT. II.

Col. I. 16.

were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

infinitely superior to any thing that is made; *for by him were all things created,*[c] *things in heaven and things on earth.* From him were derived the *visible* splendour of the celestial luminaries, the sun, the moon, and the stars, even all the hosts of these lower heavens, *and* from him the yet brighter glories of *invisible* and angelic beings, who dwell and reign above, by whatever names and honours distinguished! *whether* [*they be*] *thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers;* all the various orders of heavenly spirits, which may be designed by such or the like titles, the import of which is not exactly known to us mortals. Yet these, with *all* other *things* in the celestial, as well as terrestrial regions, *were created by him and for him;* they are the productions of his almighty power, and were made that he might be exalted and glorified in them.

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

17 *And he is before all,* both in the duration and dignity of his nature, *and in him all things,* which constitute this universal system, do continually *subsist* in that harmonious order of being which renders it one beautiful whole; whereas, unsupported by him, it would immediately run into confusion, or fall back into its original nothing.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead: that in all things he

18 *And* it is worthy of our particular consideration, that *he* who *is* thus *the Head* and Lord of all, is in a peculiar sense the Head *of the church,* [*which*] he [*is*] graciously pleased to own as *the body,* and which he with amazing condescension has united in the strictest bonds to himself, taking it under his peculiar guardianship, government and care; [*even he*] *who is,* as we before declared, *the Beginning* of the creation of God, and having stooped to assume our nature and to die in it, was also appointed to be *the First-born from the dead,*[d] the first who ever rose to an endless life; *that* so *in all things he might*

[c] *By him were all things created.*] To interpret this as the Socinians do, of the *new creation* in a spiritual sense, is so unnatural, that one could hardly believe, if the evidence were not so undeniably strong, that any set of learned commentators could fall into it.

[d] *First-born from the dead.*] Mr. Fleming would render it the *Efficient,* (or Prince, who is) the *first raiser of the dead.* (Christol. Vol. I. p. 216.) But I have given here, as every where else, what appeared to me the easiest, surest, and most natural sense, and the best commentators are agreed in it.

SECT. II.

have the pre-eminence, suitable to the infinitely superior dignity of his nature above all created beings. *For in him* his Father is ever well pleased, as he declared by a voice from heaven: and *it was his* sovereign *pleasure,* as dwelling in him, to inhabit the whole fulness of the church: and, to qualify him for the high office which he sustains, he hath appointed *that all fulness* of gifts and graces *should* ever *reside* in him,[e] even all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

might have the pre-eminence.

Col. i. 19.

19 For it pleased *the Father,* that in him should all fulness dwell;

20 *And* it hath pleased the Father likewise *by him to reconcile all things to himself,*[f] that is, to the purposes of his own glory, *having made peace by the blood of his cross;* by which the design of the ceremonial law having been answered, the obligations of it were abolished, and the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles broken down. Yea, *by him* [*God hath reconciled all things*] to each other; *whether things on earth,* that is, Jews or Gentiles, *or things in heaven,* that is, celestial spirits, who are now reconciled to fallen men, and incorporated with them into one holy and happy society.

20 And (having made peace through the blood of his cross,) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, *I say,* whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.

21 *And* the calling of the Gentile nations into the church is one important part of this plan; so that *you, who were once alienated, and enemies in* [*your*] *mind* to the blessed God *by wicked*

21 And you that were some time alienated, and enemies in *your* mind by wicked

[e] *That all fulness should reside* in him.] There is undoubtedly an ambiguity in the original phrase, εν αυτω κατοικησαι παν το πληρωμα της θεοτητος. Mr. Pierce would render it *in or by him to inhabit all fulness,* that is, the whole church or body of Christ: and that rendering would include the sense of ours, referring to God's dwelling in Christ, and so with us. Compare Rom. xi. 12, 25. But I was cautious of altering our version of so important a text, without certain and evident necessity. But some critics have observed, that when what grammarians call an infinite verb is in the New Testament, joined with the word ευδοκεω, it signifies *the action of him who is pleased,* which would indeed make the passage parallel to Eph. ii. 21, 22. Compare Eph. i. 23, where the *church* is called πληρωμα, that is, *God's fulness.* See Pierce in loc. As the word *Father* is not in the original, Mr. Reynolds would render it *he,* that is, *Christ was pleased that in him,* (i. e. in himself) *all fulness should dwell.* Reyn. of Angels p. 76. But, not to insist on the harshness of the interpretation in other respects, it seems most evident that the whole connection determines the sense quite another way.

[f] *By him to reconcile all things,* &c.] Dr. Whitby would render it, "by him to "make all things friendly in him, mak-"ing peace between them by the blood "of his cross;" and I apprehend that to be the true sense, and the only sense in which *things in heaven* can be said to be reconciled; for if it were to be granted, according to the assertion of Mr. Reynolds in the forecited place, that the *angels* received *confirming grace in Christ,* they could not upon that account be said to be *reconciled;* but when a breach commenced between man and the blessed God, the angels, as faithful subjects, must join with him against the rebellious creature, and be ready to act as enemies to him while he continued the enemy of God.

works, yet now hath he reconciled.

22 In the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight:

23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

works, he hath now reconciled to himself and to the society of his people. And this he hath done *in the body of his flesh*,[g] which he hath assumed, and *by* that *death* which he hath suffered therein, *that* so *he might present you holy and blameless, and free from all accusation in his sight*. You will certainly be so presented, *if* 23 *ye continue established and grounded in the faith* in which you have been instructed, *and be not* by any floods of affliction, or tempests of temptation, *removed* and carried away *from the* important *hope of* a happy immortality, brought to us by *the* glorious *gospel*; *which ye have heard*, [*and*] *which hath* not only been published among the Jews, but by a special commission from God, *been preached to the whole creation under heaven*, as a message which extends to all the species of mankind; by which he commandeth all men every where to repent, and promises salvation to all who believe and obey. *Of which* gospel *I Paul am appointed a minister*, and esteem it my peculiar honour and happiness that I am so.

SECT. II.

Col. I. 22.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn by this sublime discourse of our holy apostle how we are to conceive of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose glory he so wisely and happily consecrated the labours of his pen and of his life; and while we commemorate that blood of his in which we have *redemption*, *even the remission of our sins*, let us bow to him as *the image of the invisible God, and the first-born of the whole creation*. And, whatever discoveries we may at any time receive, as to the display of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness, in the formation of the visible or invisible world, let us remember that by Christ all things in both were created, not excepting thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. The angels of God worship him, as with and by the Father, 16 their great Original and Support, acknowledging with Paul, and with the whole catholic church, as taught by him, that in Christ all things subsist. Let us then, with the whole host of heaven, bow down before him, *and worship him that sits upon the throne*

Verse 14, 15

[g] *In the body of his flesh through death.*] Some have understood this as if it had been said, He hath now by his death reconciled you or incorporated you into the body of his church, which is to him as his own flesh. Compare Eph. ii. 16; v. 30. But surely *the body of his flesh* most literally and naturally signifies that body of mortal flesh which he was pleased to assume that he might be capable of suffering.

SECT. II. *and the Lamb.* Let us with all humility adore his condescension, in uniting us to himself in such dear and intimate bonds, and avowing himself *the Head of the church*, which he disdains not to call *his body*, though he be *the Beginning of the creation of God*, Ver. 18. as well as *the First-born from the dead*, and beyond comparison *pre-eminent in all.*

Important indeed are the consequences of this his condescension! It is by him that God is reconciled to us, and dwells in us. It is the blood of his cross that hath made peace between 20 Jews and Gentiles, between heaven and earth. Justly might the angels have forsaken this earth of ours, and have ascended to heaven to enter their protest against sinful men, yea, to seek a commission for executing vengeance upon the apostate creature. But now, through Christ, they are become our friends and our brethren. At his command they minister unto the heirs of salvation, and will continue their kind offices, till heaven gives the interview which earth denies, and lays a foundation for the endearments of an everlasting friendship.

23 O that this reconciling gospel might be effectually preached to every creature under heaven! But to obtain its effect, it must 21 subdue our hearts to holiness. To be still under the power of sin, to go on in a course of evil works, is to continue the enmity with God, and all his holy and happy creatures. Let us see to 22 it, that we thankfully accept the reconciliation which the gospel proposes. Then shall we at length be presented blameless, irreproachable, and holy in his sight.

As we hope for this end, let nothing remove us from our stedfastness, nor from that glorious hope of the gospel for which it is certain nothing can be an equivalent. May Divine grace establish and confirm us in it, and make us victorious over every thing that might attempt to supplant our feet and take away our crown!

SECT. III.

The apostle takes occasion from what he had before said of the excellency of Christ's person, and the riches of his redeeming grace, to express his own solicitude to fulfil his ministry among them in the most successful manner; and lays open his tender concern for the Colossians and other Christians in their neighbourhood, that they might be established in their adherence to the gospel. Col. I. 24, *to the end.* Chap. II. 1—7.

COLOSSIANS I. 24.

Col. I. 24.

NOW, my brethren, give me leave to tell you, WHO now re- that I am so far from repenting of the ministry in which I am engaged, on account of any

joice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

difficulties it brings along with it, that on the contrary, *I rejoice* even *in my sufferings for you, and* with great pleasure, *fill up whatever is wanting of the afflictions of Christ*[a] in his members, by taking part of them *in my* own *flesh, for* the sake of *his body, which*, as I said before, *is the church*, so dear to him the common Head, and to every member vitally united to him. *Of which* church *I was made a minister*, to wait upon it, and serve it in every office of humble love, *according to the dispensation of God, which was given me in respect of you, that I might thoroughly* and faithfully *preach the* whole *word of God* in the gospel. *[Even] that* great *mystery, which was hid from* so many preceding *ages and generations, but is now manifested to his saints*, of the Gentile nations as well as of Jewish extraction; *To whom God was* graciously *determined to make known what is the rich glory of this mystery*; to discover it, I say, even *among the Gentiles; which* rich display of Divine grace *is* all summed up in *[this]* one word, *[that] Christ [is] in you, the hope of* eternal *glory*; being formed by Divine grace in your hearts, he brings to you, who were once without hope, and without God in the world, (Eph. ii. 12.) the bright beamings of this blessed prospect, even a glorious and holy immortality.

Col. I. 24.

25 Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

25

26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

26

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

27

28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

And this is the illustrious Saviour, *whom we*, in the midst of all opposition, still continue to *preach, admonishing every man, and instructing every man*, as the respective circumstances of particular persons require. And, in the management of this important ministry, we conduct ourselves *with all* the *wisdom* and discretion we can obtain, that no single soul may be lost by our means; but *that we may*, if possible, *present every man* in due time, *perfect in Christ Jesus*,

28

[a] *Fill up whatever is wanting*, &c.] Nothing could be further from the apostle's intention, (as we may learn from the whole tenor of his writings) than to intimate that the sufferings of Christ were imperfect, as to that fulness of atonement which was necessary in order to the justification of believers. But he deeply retained in his mind the impression of that first lesson which he had from his Saviour's mouth, viz. that *he* was persecuted in his members; (Acts ix. 4.) he therefore considers it as the plan of Providence, that a certain measure of sufferings should be endured by this body, of which Christ was the Head; and he rejoices to think, that what *he* endured in *his own person* was congruous to that wise and gracious scheme.

SECT. III.

when he shall appear to make up his final account.[b] *To which* important [*purpose*] *I also labour* in the sphere allotted me, with diligence and resolution, exerting myself to the utmost, and *striving* with an intenseness, like that one who contends for a crown in your well-known Grecian games. Yet I arrogate nothing to myself herein, for all is carried on *according to his energy, which operates with power in me*, and supports me in the glorious contest, whereas otherwise I should sink, and become the derision of mine enemies.

Col. I. 29. 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Chap. II. 1. Nor is it without attending carefully to their full import, that I have made use of those strong terms which you have now been reading, to express the manner in which I exert myself in the great trust committed to me. *For I earnestly wish you to know what a* vigorous *contention*[c] *I have* with a variety of antagonists, *for you, and those of Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.*[d] For indeed my struggle for the gospel, while under this painful confinement is animated, not merely by considerations of personal friendship, for those whom I particularly know and love, but by a most benevolent regard to the good of mankind in general, known or unknown, that they may receive and retain this glorious revelation, and have it delivered to

II. 1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 them with all possible advantage: *That their hearts may be comforted* by the consolation of

2 That their hearts might be comforted,

[b] *Whom we preach, &c.*] All this discourse centres in the great view of engaging the Colossians to adhere to Christianity; and it is pleasant to observe, how every verse, and almost every clause, suggests more directly or obliquely, some strong argument to that purpose.

[c] *What a vigorous contention.*] The original words ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα, denote a kind of *agony* into which he was thrown. It grieved the apostle to think how incapable he was rendered of serving them otherwise than by *letters* and his *prayers*. O that such language might inspire every minister who reads it, with a desire to use his *liberty* to the best of purposes, and to exert himself as, under such *confinement*, he would wish he had done!

[d] *Have not seen my face in the flesh.*] Or, as it might be rendered, *seen me in person*. Hence some have inferred, that he had never seen Colosse or Laodicea, but Theodoret thinks he means, he had not only a conflict for *them*, but for *others*, whom he had not so much as *seen*. Possibly he may intend to intimate, that he was not only concerned for those members of these churches whom he personally knew, but likewise for others to whom he was a perfect stranger, and who might have been converted after he left them. Yet I think this epistle contains no argument from whence it can certainly be inferred that he was personally acquainted with these Christians.

being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

the Holy Spirit, and animated to every good resolution[c], *being knit together* and compacted *in* mutual Christian *love* to the whole body, *and* to Christ the great Head of it: and that being thus cemented, they may attain *the richest and most assured understanding*[d] of the gospel, and being enlightened in the clear and heart-affecting knowledge of it, they may be awakened *to the* most courageous and grateful *acknowledgment of the* sublime and adorable *mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ.* Most heartily do I wish, that, however it may be despised as foolishness by a vain world, they may steadily profess it, and live upon the blessings derived from it; Even from the gospel of the blessed Jesus, *in whom are hid all the* noblest and most desirable *treasure of wisdom and knowledge*, himself being the incarnate wisdom of God[e]. *And this I say* of the perfection of Christ and his gospel, *that no man may deceive you by* the *enticing discourses* of human philosophy, and draw you off from a becoming attachment to him. *For though I be absent* from you *in the flesh, yet in spirit I am with you*, and as my heart interests itself most tenderly in all your concerns, God is pleased, by the revelation of his Spirit, to give me a very particular view of your circumstances, so that the very sight of it could hardly be more distinct and affecting (1 Cor. v. 3.) [*And*] indeed in your present situation, it gives me a great deal of pleasure, and *I am* continually *rejoicing, while I* thus *behold your* regular and beautiful *order, and the steadiness of your faith in Christ*, which your enemies are in vain endeavouring to shake. Be concerned *therefore*, as you desire to retain this faith, to act in a manner answerable to it: and *as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord*, to

3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,

SECT. III.

Col. II. 2

3

4

5

6

[c] *Be comforted.*] The original word παρακληθωσιν signifies not only to have *consolation* administered under affliction, but to be *exhorted* and *quickened, excited* and *animated*, and so recovered from indolence and irresolution, as well as dejection.

[d] *The richest and most assured understanding.*] Εις παντα πλουτον της πληροφοριας της συνεσεως. This is an extremely *emphatical phrase*, more agreeable to the Hebrew than the Greek idiom, and it is one of the many instances of that strong manner of speaking with which the writings of our apostle abound.

[e] *Treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*] Mr. Howe thinks, that the word γνωσεως here has some oblique reference to the *gnostics*, or sect of the *knowing men*, as we might express it in English; (Vol. II. p. 226.) but I see no evidence of their having prevailed so early.

SECT. III.

whom you have vowed a most faithful obedience, an obedience indeed to which he has the justest claim, [*so*] let it be your care to *walk in* all holy conformity and subjection to *him;* That

Col. II. 6.

7 it may appear you are deeply *rooted and* solidly *edified in him*, building all your hopes of pardon and salvation on him and his religion alone; *and confirmed in the* purity of his *faith, as ye have been taught* it, *abounding* more and more *in* the lively exercise of *it*, *with* the most cordial and cheerful *thanksgiving* to God, who has been pleased to call you to the participation of all the blessings which are inseparably connected with it.

6 so walk ye in him;

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

IMPROVEMENT.

To bear sufferings with patience, has justly been reckoned an high attainment; and it was the boasted strength and glory of the Pagan philosophy to teach men to do it: a glory in which it was often deficient, a strength which often failed them, who had the

Ver. 24.

fairest opportunities of being proficients in their schools. But Paul had learnt by the philosophy of Jesus to rejoice in them, when considered as subservient to the honour of Christ, and to the

Chap. ii. 1.

good of his church, even of those members of it whom he had never seen in the flesh; rejoicing thereby to fulfil his embassy,

Chap. i. 26

and to confirm that important word of God, which taught the mystery concealed from so many ages and generations. And what was that mystery, but the same that is so clearly revealed

27 to us, even that Christ in us is the hope of glory?

To Gentile sinners that were without hope, is hope now preached; the hope not only of felicity, but glory. And this by Christ, not only as proclaimed amongst us, for to many that hear of his name, and of the scheme of salvation by him, he is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, but by Christ as in us. Highly are they honoured, who have it in charge to preach him. May

28 they learn from the apostle how it is to be done. It is to be attended with practical instructions and admonitions, to be conducted with the greatest prudence and care, and to be addressed to every man, according to his respective character and circumstances in life; that so, if it be by any means possible to prevent it, none of those that are committed to their care and charge may be lost, but every man may at length be presented perfect in Christ in that day, when, among all that truly belong to him, there shall be no remaining imperfections.

29 Surely this is a cause in which it is worth their while to strive. May the strength of God work powerfully in them for that purpose!

Then will all our hearts be comforted, when we have attained to the full assurance of the truth of our religion, when we courageously acknowledge and maintain it, when we improve it to the great end for which it was preached to us, and, having professed to receive Christ Jesus as our Lord, make it our care in a suitable manner to walk in him. For this purpose, let us endeavour to be deeply rooted and grounded in him, confirmed in the faith, as the apostles taught it; giving thanks to God for the instructions we receive in it, and numbering it, as we have great reason to do, among the choicest mercies we could receive, even from an Omnipotent hand, not only that we hear the sound of the gospel, but that we have felt its vital influence upon our hearts. SECT. III. Chap. ii. 5. 6 7

SECT. IV.

The apostle largely cautions the Colossians against suffering their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity of Christianity, either by Pagan philosophy or Jewish tradition, representing to them how complete they were in Christ without the addition of either. Col. II. 8—19.

COLOSSIANS II. 8.

col. II. 8. BEWARE lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:

SEE to it therefore, my dear brethren, *that*, as you are under such strong engagements to abound in all the fruits of that gospel which you have been taught with so much advantage, *no man make a prey of you, by* pretended *philosophy and vain deceit*,[a] *according to the tradition of men*, of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond:[b] and *according to the elements of* that literature which are so much regarded in *the world*,[c] by persons of different religious persua- SECT. IV. Col. II. 8.

[a] *Vain deceit.*] This may include any thing that would encourage a trust it was not able to support; and particularly may refer to superstitious rites and ceremonies, as well as unprofitable speculations. Different tempers lead to different excesses and errors on these heads.

[b] *Of which both Jews and Gentiles are so fond.*] Mr. Pierce thinks it is improbable that the Gentile philosophers should trouble themselves to dispute with Christians, or that they should admit any of their notions, to adulterate Christianity with them; and therefore that all the corruptions here referred to were brought in by Jewish leaders. But it appears from Philo and Josephus, that there was such an intercourse between the philosophers and the Jews, to give some tincture to their religious notions: so that I think it much more natural to suppose the apostle intended to guard them against both.

[c] *Elements of the world.*] Mr. Pierce thinks στοιχεια signifies *shadows* as opposed to *substance*. Compare Col. iv. 3, 9; Eph. iv. 14—16. Such the Jewish ceremonies undoubtedly were; but there may be a peculiar spirit in speaking of the boasted dictates of Pagan Philosophy, but as elements or lessons for children, when compared with the sublime instruction to be received in the school of Christ.

SECT. IV.

sions in it, *but* which are *not* by any means *according to Christ*, nor agreeable to the genius and simplicity of his gospel. *For in him dwell-*
Col. II. 9. *eth all the fulness of Godhead bodily* and substantially, so that his human nature is the tem-
10 ple of the Deity.[d] *And ye are complete in him;* happy enough in such a Master, and in such a Saviour, who is able to fill you with all knowledge, grace, and glory, without any such additions to his religion as human philosophy or superstition would make; even in him, *who is the Head of all principality and power*, from whom the angelic world, and creatures of the most exalted rank and dignity in it, to whom some would direct your devotions, derive their light and holiness, their honour and felicity.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power.

11 Let me therefore exhort you most steadily to adhere to this glorious Redeemer, *in whom* I may say, *ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision not performed with hands*, according to Jewish rites, but with another kind of circumcision, far more noble and excellent, which that was intended symbolically to express, even *by the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, renouncing all the deeds of it. Your engagements to this you have expressed *by* that ordinance which I may call *the circumcision of Christ*; it being that by which he hath appointed that we should be initiated into his church, as the members of it formerly were by circum-
12 cision. And to this new and more gentle rite you have conformed yourselves, *being buried with him in baptism*,[e] to express your desire of

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism,

[d] *Dwelleth all the fulness*, &c.] I was unwilling to vary any thing from the common version of so important a text, without more certain reason than I could discern here; else I might perhaps have rendered it, *in whom the whole fulness of Deity substantially dwells*. It is plain, that *the Godhead* is an *Anglicism* equivalent to *Deity*. Compare Acts xvii. 29. And I cannot think that these wonderful words are intended *merely* to signify, that God hath *lodged* in the hands of Christ, a *fulness of gifts* to be conferred upon men; as if the passage were merely parallel to Eph. iii. 19, and John i. 16, 17, as Mr. Pierce explains it; while Socinus sinks it yet lower, as if it only referred to his complete *knowledge* of the Divine will. I assuredly believe, that, as it contains an evident allusion to the *Shechinah* in which God dwelt, so it ultimately refers to the adorable *mystery* of the union of the *Divine* and *human* natures, in the Person of the glorious Emanuel, which makes him such an object of our hope and confidence, as the most exalted *creature* with the most glorious endowments, could never *of himself be*.

[e] *Buried with him in baptism.*] For the import of this phrase, and the validity of some arguments often drawn from it, see Rom. vi. 4, Vol. IV. p. 64, note [4]. Dr.

wherein also you are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

dying to sin, as he died for it; *in which* ordinance *also ye were* represented as *raised with him*, and in consequence thereof animated to all newness of life, *by* the *belief* you then professed *in* [*that*] wonderful display of the *energy of God* [*who raised him from the dead*, and thereby confirmed his doctrine in general, and in particular confirmed our hopes of a glorious resurrection and immortality, if we continue in a faithful adherence to him.

SECT. IV. Col. II. 12.

13 And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

And you, Gentiles, *who were* once *dead in* a course of notorious *trespasses*, *and in the uncircumcision of your flesh*, abandoned to all its sensual and irregular inclinations, *hath he* also *quickened together with him*, making his death and resurrection the means of spiritual life to you; *having freely forgiven all your offences*, and condescended graciously to take you into covenant with himself: And this upon a more easy and agreeable footing than Israel before stood; *having blotted out*, *with respect to us*, *the hand-writing of* Jewish *ordinances* and institutions,[g] *which was contrary to us*; (Acts xv. 10.) and had an evident efficacy, either to load us with an heavy burden, or to alienate the hearts of our Jewish brethren from us. *And* therefore he *hath taken it away* from between us, as I may so express it, *nailing it to* [*his*] *cross*, and thereby has cancelled it, as bonds are cancelled

13 14

14 Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross:

Gale pleads, that as this church at Colosse was planted earlier than that at Rome, and this epistle was written later than that to the Romans, it more abundantly confirms the perpetuity of *baptism*, as it supposes all to whom it was addressed to have been partakers of that *ordinance*, whether they were or were not descended from Christian parents. Gale's Ser. Vol. II. No. 7, p. 202, 203.

[f] *Belief in* [*that*] *energy of God*, &c.] Whatever evidence there may be from other scriptures, to prove that *faith* is the effect of a *Divine operation* on the mind, of which I am fully persuaded, (compare Eph. ii. 8, and note there,) I think the genius of the Greek language affords an argument which they, who understand it, must feel in reading this passage, to prove that it is not the sense of this text, διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας. Thus πίστις ἀληθείας is *belief of the truth*, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 15; and πίστις τοῦ Κυρίου *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, or believing on him, James ii. 1. Compare Phil. i. 27, where πίστις τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is *believing the gospel*.

[g] *Having blotted out*, &c.] I have given what appeared the most easy, natural, and comprehensive sense. Mr. Pierce says the χειρόγραφον, rendered *hand-writing*, signifies a sort of a note under a man's hand, whereby he obliges himself to the payment of any debt. The Jews bound themselves to God, by their profession of Judaism, not to worship any other Deity, nor to neglect any Divine institution; in consequence of which they rejected all communion with the Gentiles; and thus it was *against them*. The word δόγμα has been found to signify a royal *mandate or decree*, which shows it refers to the Mosaic law.

SECT. IV. Col. II. 15.

by being struck through with a nail; while he has accomplished the purposes of the ceremonial law, by that sacrifice of himself, and thereby caused the obligation of it to cease. By that important transaction, he hath also made us victorious over all our spiritual enemies, and especially the formidable spirit of darkness; *having spoiled* these *principalities and powers*[h] of the trophies which they had gained, by drawing us into the grand original apostacy, and subjecting to themselves this part of God's rational creation; *he hath made them an open spectacle* to the whole world, *triumphing over them by it*, even by that cross whereby they hoped to have triumphed over him. But God turned their counsels against themselves, and ruined their empire by that death of his Son which they had been so eager to accomplish.

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Since *therefore* the ceremonial law is now abolished, *let not any*, who is in a bigotted manner attached to it, *judge* and condemn any of *you*, Gentile Christians, *in* regard to the use of *meat or drink* forbidden by it, *or in respect to a feast* which is appointed, *or to a new-moon or sabbaths*[i] ordained as times of sacred rest and solemn worship, according to that ritual, but not therefore by any consequence holy to us.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath-*days*:

17 *Which things are* indeed, in their original design,

17 Which are a

[h] *Having spoiled principalities and powers.*] It is generally known that Mr. Pierce, in his interpretation of this text, gives it a very singular turn: as if the sense were, "That God hath divested the "good *angels* of that authority which "they had in the world before the incarnation of Christ, and caused them to "attend his triumph when he ascended "into heaven, and publicly proposed "them as an example (ὑποδειγματισας) of "cheerful and acceptable obedience to "him." And it is pleaded, with considerable plausibility, that ὑποδειγματιζω is used in that sense, 2 Cor. ii. 14. This he thinks suits this connection, as this *spoiling principalities and powers*, is ascribed to *God*, and as it is introduced as an argument against *worshipping angels*. But it is certain, that *principalities and powers* may indifferently signify *good or bad angels*. Compare Eph. vi. 12. God hath undoubtedly *triumphed* in the *triumph* of his Son, and the sense which Mr. Pierce takes the word ὑποδειγματισας is a very unusual one. Dr. Whitby observes, that Cerinthus and Simon Magus, whose doctrines he imagines the apostle is opposing in this part of his epistle, pretended to deliver men from the power of *evil spirits*, by whom they said the world was made and governed.

[i] *Sabbaths.*] Mr. Baxter observes, with his usual spirit, that we may well wonder at those good men that can find the prohibition of a *form of prayer*, or a written sermon in the second commandment, and yet cannot find the *abrogation* of the *Jewish law* relating to the sabbath, in these plain words of the apostle. For it is certainly most arbitrary to pretend, that these words do not include a *weekly sabbath*, when there was no other solemnity so *generally* signified by that name, though the use of the *plural* number shews that *all* days of *sacred rest* appointed by Moses were to be taken in.

shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

and constitution, only *a shadow of* good *things to come*, intended to lead the mind to spiritual and evangelical blessings; *but the body* and substance of them [*is*] given us in the gospel *of Christ*, in whom they all centre, and, having the latter, we need not be solicitous about the former. SECT. IV. Col. II. 17.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into these things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;

Let no one, therefore, *who may* ever so eagerly *desire it*, or ever so artfully attempt it, *deprive you of your* great *prize*,[k] for which as Christians you contend, *by* [*an affected*] *humility, and the worship of angels*, (which some Jewish zealots, as well as heathen philosophers, so eagerly inculcate,[l]) *intruding* officiously and presumptuously *into that which he hath not seen*; while they pretend to tell us wonderful secrets, relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. This may render a man the admiration of the ignorant and inconsiderate, but it is indeed the result of his being *vainly puffed up by his* corrupt and *fleshly mind*, with the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion. 18

19 And not holding the head, from which all the body

And so men wander themselves, and mislead others, in consequence of their *not holding* and properly adhering to him whom I mentioned above as *the Head*, even 19

[k] *Let no man deprive you.* &c.] The original, is Μηδεις ὑμας καταβραβευετω θελων εν ταπεινοφροσυνη, &c. I suppose θελων to signify a *desire* of any to impose upon them, but Sir Norton Knatchbull connects it with the words immediately following, and renders the whole, "*Let no man deceive you with fallacious arguments, who is delighted with humility and the worship of angels.*" The word ταπεινοφροσυνη undoubtedly signifies *humility* in general, but as the connection determines it to signify what was *affected* and at best *fantastic* if not *counterfeit*, I have added a word in the version.

[l] *Worship of angels.*] It evidently appears from several passages in Philo, to have been the opinion of that learned Jew, that *angels* were messengers who presented our prayers to God, as well as brought down his favours to us. He represents this view of the matter as most *humble* and reverential, and there is no doubt but it prevailed among other Jews, (compare Tob. xii. 15; xii. 12, 15.) and that the apostle refers to this, seems much more probable than the interpretation of Tertullian, who would explain it of *worship taught by angels*, or persons pretending to receive revelations from them. Whether the heathen began as early as this, to call those celestial spirits, *angels*, whom they had formerly called *good demons*, I do not certainly know; but it is evident, that very soon after the apostles' days, they speak of *angels* and *archangels*, and recommend the worship of them under those names. See Jamblic. de Myst. sect. ii. cap. 2, 3. It is justly remarked by Bishop Burnet, that had it been the apostle's intention to give the least encouragement to any religious addresses to *saints* and *angels*, this would have been a very natural occasion of introducing the subject, and adjusting its proper boundaries. Burnet on the Art. p. 225.

SECT. IV. Col. II. 19.

the Lord Jesus Christ; *from whom the whole body* of the church *being supplied, and compacted* by the union of various *joints and bands, increases in* grace and holiness continually, and at length attaineth to *the increase of God;* to whom therefore I most earnestly exhort you, my brethren, continually and stedfastly to adhere.

by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us contemplate, with daily pleasure, the glorious effects of the death of our blessed Redeemer, by which the *Mosaic law* Ver. 14. was *abolished*, the *hand writing of ordinances blotted out;* that death, by which so glorious a victory over our spiritual enemies 15 was obtained, by which the infernal *principalities and powers* were stripped of their trophies, and themselves exposed as an *open spectacle*. Let us improve this victory to all the glorious purposes for which it was intended. Let us above all consider it as an engagement to a life of exemplary holiness, especially 11 as we are ourselves circumcised with the circumcision of Christ; as by baptism we are solemnly engaged to mortify all irregular 12 affections, and, being buried with Christ in that solemn rite, to 13 rise to all newness of life, having received the forgiveness for our sins, and being raised with Christ to the hope of eternal glory.

Let us be solicitous ever to maintain the strictest union with 9 *Christ* as our *Head*, remembering how great an honour it is to 10 be thus related to him, *in whom dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead bodily*. Let us be careful, in virtue of this union, to live in the communion of Christian love, with all the members of the body, and ourselves to grow with all the increase of God.

8 And let us guard against all those human traditions, or refine- 16, 17 ments of philosophical speculation, which are disagreeable to these elements of Christ into which we have been initiated; and against every thing which could be an infringement of that liberty which Christ hath granted to his church, and which it is our duty to endeavour to maintain, against all encroachments; even though they should be made by any in his name, and under the 18 pretence of authority from him. It may be urged upon us as humility, to submit to such impositions, but it is the truest humility to maintain an exact obedience to the authority of our Divine Master, and to limit even our submission to those of our brethren whom we may most honour and love, by a regard to his command and institution. And if a due care is not taken in this respect, we may be deprived, at least in some degree, of our 8 prize, by the methods whereby some may endeavour to persuade us that we shall most effectually secure it. May Divine wisdom preserve us from all those vain deceits whereby our faith might

be corrupted, or our conformity to the plan of Christian institutions be rendered, in any respect, less beautiful, pure, and complete. SECT. IV.

SECT. V.

The apostle further cautions the Colossians against those corrupt additions to Christianity which some were attempting to introduce, especially by rigours and superstitions of their own devising; and exhorts them, as the properest method for their security, to be endeavouring to raise their hearts more to Christ, as their ascended Lord and life. Col. II. 20, *to the end.* Chap. III. 1—4.

COLOSSIANS II. 20.

Col. II. 20. WHEREFORE, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

I HAVE mentioned the relation in which you stand to Christ as your Head, and I must from hence take occasion farther to plead the obligations you are under to labour after a growing conformity to him in all things. *If therefore ye* are indeed (as by baptism ye profess to *be*) *dead with Christ*[a], *from the elements* and rudiments *of the world*, from those things which among the Gentiles or the Jews men are apt to build so much upon, *why, as if ye were* still *living* as before *in the world*, and stood in that respect on an equal footing with others, *do ye meddle with these appointments*, subjecting yourselves to them; yea, and are ready yourselves to insist on the observation of them, and even to join in imposing them upon others. And particularly those which the Mosaic law inculcates, such as, *touch not* any thing ceremonially unclean, *taste not* any food which that prohibits, *handle not* any thing by which such pollution may be contracted[b]. *All which things tend to* the *cor-*

SECT. V. Col. II. 20.

21 (Touch not, taste not, handle not:

22 Which all are to perish with the

21

22

[a] *If therefore ye be dead with Christ*, &c.] Some have considered this as the beginning of a new paragraph, addressed to Jewish zealots among them; and plead, in support of this opinion, that the subjection to ordinances which the apostle here reproves, is inconsistent with the applauses he had before bestowed upon the Colossians. But it seems most natural to suppose, that he addresses the society in general, and leaves it to their own consciences to determine which of them deserved the censure.

[b] *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*] It has been observed, that the quick succession of these precepts, without any *copulatives* between, happily expresses the *eagerness* with which the seducing teachers inculcated these things. Dr. Whitby shews that Cerinthus' doctrine and pra-

SECT. V.

Col. II. 23.

ruption of that excellent religion into which you have the honour to be initiated; *by the abuse* of them, *according to the commandments and doctrines of* mistaken and ill-designing *men*, who insist so eagerly upon them, as if they were essential to salvation; though, as I observed before, they have answered their great end, so far as they were of Divine institution, and are now laid aside by the same authority that introduced them, so that all obligation upon the conscience

23 is ceased. Concerning *which things* we may in the general observe, that they *have indeed a pretence of wisdom*, and are in that view gravely insisted upon, especially by the more rigorous sects; but many of them are of such a nature, that, even while that Jewish œconomy continued in force, they made no genuine part of it, but rather taught men to pervert religion, by making it to consist *in will-worship*, which they themselves devised, *and*, in an affected *humility* of address, *and in* a *severity to the body*; which, rigorous as it seemed, was far from being true mortification, or disposing the mind to it. On the contrary, while it puffed men up with a vain conceit of their own sanctity, it might be said rather to tend *to the dishonourable satisfying of the flesh* [c], while it seemed most to afflict it: for that self-complacency, ostentation, and contempt of others, with which these severities are often attended, is indeed a carnal principle; nor could the grossest sensualities be more contrary to the will of God and the genius of true religion.

using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

cepts had much of this cast, and some of his quotations are remarkable in this view.

[c] *Dishonourable satisfying of the flesh.*] Ουκ εν τιμῃ τινι προς πλησμονην σαρκος, I suppose the two clauses may be transposed, as if it had been said, It is to such a satisfying of the flesh as does it *carnal honour*; which I take to be a *metonymy*, to express what is *dishonourable*; whereas the highest *honour* of our bodies is to be the *instruments of our souls* in the service of God. Mr. Howe observes, that τιμη signifies *provision*, as well as *honour*, and thinks the sense to be, that though there was no appearance of *providing* for the flesh, yet there was a *carnal* kind of satisfaction in these *affected* severities, when proceeding from the principles of vain-glory and ill-nature, which were as contrary to the genius of true religion as any of the grossest sensualities that could be imagined. Howe's Works, Vol. I. p. 375. And this is certainly the true sense in the general, though this explication of τιμη should be disputed. The Persian Testament renders it, "Which "things have indeed some appearance "of wisdom, in that they are a volun-"tary worship, that they have an air of "humility, that they spare not the body, "and that they have no regard to the "satisfying the flesh;" which reads roundly, but gives a most unauthorised sense to ουκ εν τιμῃ τινι, and exchanges the spirit of the concluding words for a flat tautology.

III. 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God.

2 Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

SER. V. Col. III. 1.

And let me farther improve the great principle I have laid down, and urge, that *since ye are risen with Christ*, ye should *therefore seek things that are above*[d] the sphere of this mortal and animal life; even there *where Christ is sitting* in dignity and felicity *at the right-hand of God.* Yes, my brethren, charge it continually on your consciences, that ye *mind*, prefer, affect, and pursue *the things that are above*, and *not those* [*that are*] here *on* this low *earth* And this attachment to the great and glorious views of the invisible and eternal world will moderate your regards to many other things about which you are ready to be so much engaged. And surely this may reasonably be expected, *for ye are* by solemn profession, as I pleaded before, *dead* with Christ, *and your* new and better *life* flows from him, and *is*, as it were, *hidden with Christ in God*[e]. A regard to an unseen Saviour is the great principle that animates it, and it centres on that blessed world where he reigns, and where God displays the brightest tokens of his majestic and gracious presence. And you have this farther transporting assurance, that *when Christ* [*who is*] the great Spring of *our* celestial *life*, and highest object of our desire, *shall appear* in all the pomp and splendour of his final triumph, *then you shall also appear with him in glory*, making a part of that one bright and illustrious assembly which he shall then redeem from the power of the grave, and form to a perfection of soul, and lustre of body, suitable to the relation in which they all stand to him as the great Conqueror of death and hell, and So-

2 3 4

[d] *Things that are above.*] Calvin understands this of the *sublimer parts of Christianity*, as opposed to Jewish ceremonies and *rudiments of the world*, mentioned chap. ii. 20; but it cannot properly be said, that these are *with Christ in heaven*. I think therefore the apostle proceeds on the principles he had laid down, to graft a most important practical exhortation, different from any he had advanced before, (as he certainly does, ver. 5.) yet nothing could more effectually tend to take them off from those bigotted attachments of which he was solicitous to cure them. A remarkable instance of that happy address which we have so often had opportunity of observing, and which an attentive reader will observe in many other places, where we have not had room to point it out.

[e] *Your life is hid*, &c.] The *life* of the Christian is here represented as an invaluable *jewel*, and under a double *security*, reserved *in heaven*, and laid up *with Christ in God*; secure therefore as the abode of Christ with the Father, or as the fidelity and immutability of the Father himself could make it.

SECT. V. vereign of universal nature. Let us therefore contentedly wait for our supreme felicity till that glorious day shall come.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us charge it on our hearts, by all our great and solemn obligations to Jesus, our beloved Saviour and glorified Head, that we study the nature of true religion with greater care, and practise it with greater constancy. Let us not place it in a zeal for *ceremonial* observances, *according to the doctrines and commandments of men.* Let us ever remember that Christ alone is the Lawgiver of his church, and let us solicitously guard against the abuses in religion, which would be the consequence of introducing, and much more of imposing, human ordinances. Too sensibly has the church in all ages seen and felt the unhappy effects of such a temper. Its divisions, and its formality, may in a great measure be traced up to this source. Will-worship and a voluntary humility have proved its disgrace, and in some countries almost its ruin. Let us labour after sublimer views, and considering ourselves as *risen with Christ,* let us *seek the things that are above.* Let us cultivate greater spirituality of mind, and endeavour to have our hearts there where our Lord is.

Verse 20, 22

32

Chap. iii. 1.

Surely the reflection upon that relation in which we stand to him, in concurrence with that glory in which he is now enthroned, the kind designs he still bears to us, and the prospect we have of *sitting down with him* ere long, *in that kingdom,* may well *raise our thoughts* thither, and bear us above all immoderate attachment to these low scenes of mortal life.

2

Let us therefore study more and more the hidden life of the Christian: and, considering Christ as our life, be often anticipating in our thoughts the great day of his appearance, and dwelling on the blessed hope of appearing with him in glory. But, O! how dark are our views of these things! How little do we feel of the sanctifying and elevating influence of this hope! Let us earnestly pray for a more abundant communication of Divine grace, that, deriving more and more of this spiritual life from Christ, we may have more suitable and affectionate apprehensions of that angelic life to which his love has destined us, and to which such a temper tends directly to lead us.

3

4

SECT. VI.

The apostle presses the Colossians to guard against every degree of uncleanness, malice, and falsehood, and to abound in the practice of the opposite virtues, and in those devout exercises and evangelical views by which they might be animated to cultivate them. Col. III. 5—17.

COLOSSIANS III. 5.

SECT. VI. Col. III. 5

Col. III. 5. MORTIFY therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry?

YOU have heard of the glorious hope which we entertain as Christians, let me *therefore* urge it upon you, that you be influenced in a suitable manner by it, and particularly that it engage you to *mortify* those lusts which are so apt to dwell in *your members that are on earth*; such as *fornication, uncleanness*, and every other kind and degree of *inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and an insatiable desire* of any carnal gratification, an object *which is* indeed nothing less than *idolatry*, or paying that regard to the most unworthy things which is due to God alone. *On account of which the wrath of God* 6 *is coming*, not only on those who profess themselves his people, but even *on the children of disobedience*, on heathens themselves, who bid the most open defiance to what we well know to be the first principles of true religion. *Among* 7 *whom ye also once walked*, and had your conversation, partaking with your neighbours in all their enormities, *when* formerly *ye lived among them*, and made a part of their number. *But* 8 *now*, being converted to the pure, peaceful, and devout religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, see to it, that *ye also put away all these* enormities, and particularly the transports of open *rage*, the secret grudgings of concealed *resentment*, the malignant working of *malice*, the injuries of *evil-speaking*,[a] the scandals of *lewd conversation*;[b]

6 For which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy

[a] *Evil-speaking.*] The original word properly signifies *blasphemy*, but it includes not only impious speeches with regard to God, which is the highest degree of malignant language, but all railing and reproachful speeches against our brethren, proceeding from the transports of furious passions.

[b] *Lewd conversation.*] So I understand αισχρολογιαν; of *obscene* and *impure words*, which are so scandalously common, (if I may credit reports, which I cannot suspect,) among many, whom good breeding at least should teach better, if they had no regard to any higher consideration. But Dr. Whitby explains it of re-

SECT. VI.

and let them all be resolutely banished *out of your mouth*, and out of your heart: *Neither lie one to another*, either in trade or common conversation; *having* solemnly professed to *put off the old man with his* iniquitous *deeds*, and entirely renounced all those corrupt affections

Col. III. 9

10 which were naturally so prevalent in you; *And having* declared it as your design and resolution, to *put on the new* [*man*,] all the branches of that contrary temper and disposition, which constitute the Christian character, and *which is renewed in knowledge* of our true duty and interest, and universal holiness, as the genuine fruit of it; *according to the image of him that*

11 *created him*, even of God, who is himself the great standard of all moral perfection. Thus you will indeed become genuine members of that blessed society *where there is* no distinction between men of different nations, education, or ranks in life; where *neither* is any man rejected for being a *Greek*, *nor* accepted merely for being a *Jew*; a society where he can claim nothing by virtue of *circumcision*, *nor* lose any thing by *uncircumcision*; where no *barbarian*, or even *Scythian*, is treated with contempt for that want of learning and politeness which is to be found in the most remote nation; or any *slave* trampled upon as unworthy notice, since he shares with others in the possession of that inestimable treasure, an immortal soul, and may have a part in the great Redeemer of souls: [*nor*] is a *freeman* chiefly esteemed or regarded upon account of his boasted liberty; *but* rather in proportion to his subjection to our Divine Master: for this is the great band of union among them all, the matter of their boasting and their joy, that they are related to *Christ*, who is acknowledged to be *all* that is amiable and excellent, *and* who dwells *in all* true believers, without any difference on any of these accounts.

12 Consider this, my brethren, whatever your external circumstances may be, and *put on therefore, as the chosen* people *of God*,* *holy* to him,

communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him;

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and belov-

proachful speeches that expose others to contempt; which to me seems a very unnatural interpretation.

* *Put on as the chosen of God.*] This is not inconsistent with what was said above (ver. 10,) of *their having* already *put on*

SECT. VI. Col. III. 12.

ed,) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;

and beloved by him, set apart to his service, and blessed with the tokens of his peculiar favour, *bowels of tender mercy* to all the afflicted and distressed, *gentleness* to all men, *lowliness of mind*, engaging you to condescend even to those in the humblest stations, *meekness* under whatever injuries and provocations ye may receive, and *long-suffering*, when your trials may be in their continuance tedious, as well as violent in their degree; *Forbearing* to break out into any 13 revengeful actions, or reproachful speeches against *one another*, *and* not only so, but cordially *forgiving one another*, *if any have a quarrel against another*; *even as Christ hath freely forgiven you*, though you have in so many instances injured and provoked him, *so also* do *ye*, in imitation of an example so amiable and so Divine. *And above all these things* [*put on*] *love*, *which* 14 *is* indeed *the* very *bond of* all *perfection*, and which will keep your minds stedfast, and establish that consistency of sentiments and behaviour which is so honourable in the Christian character, and tends so much to its security. *And let the peace of God* always *preside* as the 15 great umpire *in your hearts*,[d] even that placid and benign temper which so naturally results from a sense of your reconciliation to God. This is the blessed state and disposition *into which you also are called* by the gospel, being happily united *in one body*; *and be ye thankful* for those privileges which result from it, whatever affliction may for the present be allotted to you. And *let the word of Christ*, the gospel 16 which you have received, *dwell in you richly in all wisdom*; lay it up in your hearts, meditate upon it continually, and endeavour wisely to improve it to the best purpose. And, in this view, be often *teaching* one another the doctrines of Christianity, *and admonishing one another*

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

14 And above all these things, *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admo-

the new man, as the apostle intended here to exhort them to advance more and more in these benevolent dispositions, which did in some considerable degree already prevail in their hearts.

[d] *Let the peace of God preside in your hearts.*] The original word which we render *preside*, is βραβευσίω. Let it fill your hearts, says Pasor, with such a joy as victors have when they receive τὸ βραβεῖον, *the prize*, in the Olympic games. I rather think it signifies, let it *preside* in your minds, as the master of the games does in those solemnities. And, as this is the sense in which I long ago apprehended the word was to be taken, it is a great satisfaction to me to find this interpretation confirmed by the authority of so great a critic as Beza.

SECT. VI.

Col. III. 16.

concerning the duties of it; and let these seasons, whether of public worship, or private conference, be in a proper manner diversified *with* the use of David's *psalms, and* other evangelical *hymns and spiritual songs,*[e] which under the influences of the Spirit ye may be enabled to compose. For it will be both pleasant and profitable to be frequently employed in *singing* such pieces of sacred poetry and music, provided it be not merely the language of the lip, or the exercise of the voice, but be likewise attended *with* the exercise of *grace in your heart*; which surely it will be, if we rightly consider that they are addressed *to the Lord*, to whom every sentiment of the heart is known, and to whom nothing can be acceptable which is not attended with cordial devotion. *And*, upon this great principle, you may take it as a general rule, that *whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed*, in all your discourses, and in all your actions, you [*do*] *all* things *in the name of the Lord Jesus* Christ; all to the purposes of his glory, and all in humble dependence upon him, both for the communication of spiritual strength, and for your acceptance with God. And, while you have so dear and acceptable a name to use in your approaches to the Divine Majesty, rejoice in this inestimable privilege; perform the duties incumbent upon you with pleasure, and be continually *giving thanks to God even the Father through him*, who will graciously recommend, by his prevailing intercession, your prayers and praises, as well as your other services, to the Divine regard.

nishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.

[e] *Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.*] Calvin thinks all these words refer to David's poetical pieces, as some of them are called מכתמים *Mikhtamim, psalms*, attended with instruments, some תהלים *Tehillim*, which he thinks were *prayers* generally sung, and others שירים *Sharim, songs*, containing not only proper and immediate acts of devotion addressed to God, but also *moral* and *religious instructions*. But I see not the authority of this interpretation, and think it much more reasonable to believe, that by *hymns and spiritual songs* he means such poetical compositions, as, under the influence of the Spirit, were written or uttered. For it would be very absurd to suppose, that when there was such a gift in the church, as we are sure there was, (compare 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 26.) they should be confined to the words of David in all their devotions of this kind. And it would certainly be as reasonable for us, in these latter ages, to explode all kind of prayers in public, but liturgies collected from the words of scripture, as all sacred songs in Divine worship, are but literal translations from what is called the Book of Psalms. Numberless passages of the Old and New Testament are equally capable of furnishing us with sacred anthems.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET Christians solemnly charge upon themselves an abstinence from those vices which bring the wrath of God upon heathens; and, though it should be like wounding or cutting off our members, let us put on an holy resolution to mortify them; and, not content with refraining from all degrees of pollution, falsehood, and malignity of heart, let us be more solicitous to put on the new man, which is the creation of God in the soul, and which bears his amiable image. Whatever our nation or rank, our education or our circumstances in life may be, let this be our concern, that we may be in Christ, and Christ in us, for on that depends our everlasting all. Happy the most untaught savage, and the most oppressed slave, who is thus related to the incarnate wisdom of God, and the great Lord of all, infinitely beyond the politest Greek, the most ceremonious Jew, the freest subject, or the most despotic prince, who is a stranger to such a blessing!

SECT. VI.

Verse 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11

If we have any reason to hope that we are the *elect of God, holy and beloved* by him, let this charm us to entertain the most beneficent sentiments and views with regard to our fellow-creatures, and teach us to *put on bowels of mercy, gentleness, humility, meekness, and long-suffering.* Let the grace of Christ in *freely forgiving us*, teach us to rejoice in opportunities of imitating it. Do we desire to feel the *peace of God presiding* in us, let us exercise *charity, the bond of perfectness*, and let us study to be more and more thankful, in whatever stations we are placed; observing attentively its advantageous circumstances, reflecting especially how much worse things might have been, and how unworthy we ourselves are of any distinction which God may be pleased to make in our favour.

12, 13, 14, 15

We have especially great reason most thankfully to acknowledge the Divine goodness, in providing us with so many religious advantages, and particularly with those that relate to the most decent and edifying performance of the duty of psalmody. To furnish us for a right discharge of it, let us carefully treasure up the word of Christ in our minds, and let us be ever more solicitous to preserve the melody of the heart than that of the voice. In this, and in every other service, let all be done in the name of Christ, and then we may humbly hope that all shall be accepted through him. And, if that prevailing name do not recommend us to acceptance, the divine purity will find something in every one of them which will justify God, not only in rejecting them, but in condemning us.

16, 17

SECT. VII.

The apostle recommends to the Colossians a care in performing the duties that answered to the several relations of life in which they stood, whether they were wives or husbands, children or parents, servants or masters. Col. iii. 18, *to the end.* IV. 1—6.

COLOSSIANS III. 18.

SECT. VII. Col. III. 18.

LET me now remind you, as I frequently do my other Christian friends, both in my sermons and epistles, of how great importance it is to endeavour after such a temper and behaviour, in respect to the relative duties of life, as may adorn a Christian profession. And be particularly exhorted, ye *wives*, that ye *be subject to your own husbands*, though they should be Jews or heathens, *as it is becoming in the Lord:* for a modest, respectful, obedient behaviour in this most endearing relation, will make your characters appear beautiful, and so far gain upon those of them who are strangers to Christianity, as to give them a good opinion of it upon
19 that account. And, on the other hand, ye *husbands*, be exhorted tenderly to *love* [*your*] *wives, and be not* severe and *bitter against them*, as too many in the world are, who become domestic tyrants, and quarrel with their wives upon every trifling occasion: thus overbearing those whom they should rather guard and comfort, breaking their tender spirits, and perhaps shortening their days.

20 *Children*, see to it that ye *be obedient to* [*your own*] *parents, in all* lawful *things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, who, when he condescended to dwell in human flesh, was a constant example of filial piety, not only to his real mother, but to him who was
21 only his supposed father. (Luke xi. 51.) And ye *fathers*, see to it, that you *do not* so abuse the superiority of the relation, as by a perverse and excessively severe conduct, to *provoke your children* [*to wrath*], *lest they be discouraged* from attempting to please you, when it shall seem to be an impossible task; and be rendered unfit to pass

COL. III. 18. WIVES, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

through the world with advantage, when their spirits have been so unreasonably broken under an oppressive yoke in the earliest years of life. SER. VII.

22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

Ye *servants, be subject in all things*, so far as duty will permit, *to* [*them that are,*] *with respect to the flesh* [*your*] *masters*, and whose property Divine Providence has suffered you to become: obey their commands, and take care of their interest, *not* merely *with eye-service, as* those who are solicitous only to be *men-pleasers, but* as *in* the *simplicity of* your *heart, fearing God*, and therefore for his sake attending to the offices of that humble station he has been pleased to assign you; as those who remember that his authority enforces that of your earthly masters. Col. III. 22

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men:

And whatsoever work ye are employed in, pursue it heartily and diligently, *as* therein paying a tribute of love and duty *to the Lord* Jesus Christ himself, *and not to men* alone: *Knowing* that, in this case, your diligence in your secular calling shall be accepted, with regard to the principle from whence it proceeds, and *that you shall receive from the Lord* Jesus Christ *the* gracious *recompense;* not indeed an estate in this world, like that which your masters may value themselves upon, but, what is infinitely more important, the possession *of an* eternal *inheritance* above. *For ye* herein *serve the Lord Christ*, whose rewards are according to his own majesty, grace, and power, and not according to the meanness of our deserts. 23

24 Knowing, that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

And, on the other hand, *he that is injurious* to any, in one relation of life or another, *shall receive according to the injury that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons* with God. Nor shall a Christian servant be excused because it is an heathen master he hath injured. 24 25

IV. 1. Masters, give unto *your* servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

On the same principles, ye *masters* are to be exhorted and charged, that *ye render unto* [*your*] *servants justice and equity;* even to those who are most entirely in your power, and who have no human appeal left, whatever wrongs they may receive; *knowing that ye also have a Master in the heavens*, to whom you must give an account, whose power is irresistible, and who seeing, as he does, the whole of your conduct, will ano- IV. 1

SECT. VII.

Col. IV. 2.

ther day bring you unto judgment, for every relation you have sustained, and will not forget your treatment of your very slaves. And that, on the whole, all these different duties may be well discharged, and all these relations in life properly filled up, *persevere in* fervent and earnest *prayer* to God, *watching* against negligence and indolence *in it*, and endeavouring to keep up your hearts and your hopes, *with* a mixture of *thanksgiving* for those mercies which you have already received in answer to former petitions, or in which God has prevented you with the blessings of his goodness. And these are so various and so important, that, in whatever circumstances you are, you will necessarily have cause for praise. *At the same time also*, in a particular manner be *praying for us*[a], *that God may open to us a door of utterance*, (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 9;) that I may have an opportunity *to speak* of the gospel in general, and the right of the believing Gentiles to all its privileges, even *the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds;* bonds, then most grievous to me, when they prove an obstruction to that great business and joy of my life, the propagation of that sacred scheme and system of truths in which the glory of God and the happiness of men is also highly concerned. And pray *that*, when these restraints shall be taken off, *I may make it manifest as I ought to speak*, and may never be so terrified by the most formidable enemies or dangers, as in any degree to suppress it.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal, praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds;

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 As for yourselves, *walk in wisdom towards them that are without* the pale of the church, your heathen neighbours, and particularly your magistrates, doing nothing to disgrace religion in their eyes, or unnecessarily to exasperate them against you; *redeeming the time*; endeavouring to employ it as usefully as you can, and to protract your period of service as long as may be, by prudently declining any dangers to which duty does not require you to expose yourselves.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

[a] *Praying for us.*] Dr. Whitby justly observes, that it is very remarkable, that Paul, who so often and so earnestly entreats the intercession of his Christian friends, should never speak of the intercession of the Virgin Mary, or of departed saints or angels, if he believed it a duty to seek it.

[c] Let your speech *be* alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how you ought to answer every man.

Let your speech [*be*] *always with grace*,[b] conducted in the most mild and courteous, the most proper and graceful manner; so that it may appear influenced by a governing principle of Divine grace and unfeigned piety in your hearts. Let it in this respect be so *seasoned with* the *salt* of heavenly wisdom, as may render it savoury and edifying. In this view reflect upon things and circumstances before you speak, *that you may* not utter any thing which would be rash and foolish, but may *know how you ought to answer every one* who may question you about your religion and your conduct, in a manner that may most effectually tend to your own security, and to the edification of others. Compare 1 Pet. iii. 15. Sect. VII. Col. IV. 6.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy will particular persons, families, and larger societies be, if these apostolic maxims be carefully pursued! While wives are submissive to their husbands, and husbands affectionate to their wives; children obedient to their parents, and parents tenderly careful of their children; servants revering the commands of their masters, and conscientiously and constantly attending to their interests; and masters concerned to maintain all equity in their behaviour to those of their servants who are most entirely in their power; remembering on all sides the account to be given to the supreme Master in heaven, and humbly looking for the reward of the inheritance. Chap. iii. 18—24. iv. 1. iii. 24.

To engage a steady and uniform care in all these various duties, and to make us truly good in every relation of life, let us be daily drawing down grace from God, by continuing instant in prayer; and, as our spirits are so ready to grow cold and indifferent in it, let us watch thereunto, lest by insensible degrees, we grow remiss in the performance, and from that remissness come entirely or frequently to neglect it. iv. 2.

Let every mercy we receive from God awaken our thankfulness, and animate our devotion; and let us not forget in our prayers the ministers of Christ; but ask for them those assistances from on high which may enable them to open their mouth boldly, in declaring that mysterious and important doctrine with which they are charged, and on which the salvation of immortal souls depends. 3, 4

[b] *Always with grace.*] Dr. Scott thinks, that the phrase ἐν χαριτι signifies *cheerful* and *agreeable*, not whining and melancholy. Scott's Christian Life, Vol I. p. 285. I have included this in the paraphrase, but cannot apprehend it was chiefly designed.

SECT. VII.

To enforce their labours as much as possible, let us add the influence of a regular and amiable behaviour, conducting ourselves with wisdom towards all, and particularly those who are
Verse 5. strangers to religion; and redeeming time, as those that know its infinite importance, because they see eternity connected with it. And that we may not, as is so frequent, lose the time we
6 spend in conversation, let us seek more of the salt of Divine grace in our hearts, to correct their innate corruption, and learn the happy art of improving discourse well, and of answering others in such a manner, that, without dictating to them, we may gently lead them to the most useful reflections, and make our lips, like those of the righteous, a fountain of life unto them. (Prov. x. 11.)

SECT. VIII.

The apostle concludes his epistle to the Colossians with recommending Tychicus and Onesimus to them, and inserts various salutations, and a solemn admonition to Archippus. Col. IV. 7, *to the end.*

COLOSSIANS IV. 7.

SECT. VIII.

IT is now time that I should draw towards the close of this epistle, which I will not enlarge by insisting particularly *on the things which relate to myself*; for *Tychicus*,[a] *a beloved brother, and a faithful deacon* of your church, *and fellow servant* with me *in the* delightful work of our common *Lord, will make* them *known to you* by word of mouth, in a more particular manner than I can now conveniently write of them.
Col. IV. 7.

8 To him I intrust this epistle, and to him I refer you for an account of my present situation, *whom I have* now *sent to you for this very purpose, that he may know your affairs*, and when he returns to me again, (as I hope he quickly will) I may know them also; *and* that he in the mean time *may comfort your hearts* by his Christian counsels and exhortations, as well as by the information he may bring you of what has passed here, and of the state of the churches

COL. IV. 7.

ALL my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord:

8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

[a] *Tychicus*] From comparing this verse with Eph. vi. 21, 22, where Tychicus is mentioned as sent by Paul from Rome to Ephesus, a city not very far from Colosse, it may, I think (as has been already observed in the Introduction to this epistle, and in that to the Ephesians,) be very probably inferred, that these two epistles, which contain many passages very nearly resembling one another, were written about the same time, and might be sent together.

around, so far as I have been made acquainted with it. And *with* him comes *Onesimus*,[b] *a faithful and beloved brother, who is* [*one*] *of you*, and has resided at Rome some time. *They will* be able more particularly to *inform you of the state of things here.* SECT. VIII. Col. IV. 9.

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here.

Aristarchus, once my companion and fellow-labourer at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 29.) and now *my fellow-captive* for the sake of the gospel, *salutes you* in the Lord; *and* John *Mark*, who is *sister's son to* that great and excellent apostle *Barnabas, concerning whom ye have* formerly *received instructions*: he will quickly leave these parts; I desire therefore that, *if he comes to you*, ye would *receive him* with all respect and affection, as he is one who, whatever misunderstanding there might once have been between us, is entitled to my sincerest esteem.[c] (Compare Acts xv. 38.) *And* I am also to send you the salutation of *Jesus, who is called Justus*,[d] and well deserves the name, on account of his strict and approved integrity. *These* whom I have named last, *are the only persons, who being of the circumcision*, [*have been*] *fellow-labourers with me in the* service of the *kingdom of God*, and *who have been a comfort to me* under my sufferings in the defence of its interests, and been ready to concur with me in any endeavours for its advancement. 10 11

10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only *are my* fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Epaphras, who is one of your own *society*, and whom I judge to be *a* most faithful *servant of Christ, salutes you*, and is *always striving* and wrestling with God *for you in* [*his*] *prayers, that ye may* attain to the greatest improvements and establishments in Christianity, and so *stand* 12

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you always, labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand

[b] *Onesimus.*] This verse makes it probable, that this epistle, if it was not written, was at least delivered after that to Philemon, and that the admirable letter to him produced its desired effect. See the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 89.

[c] *My sincerest esteem.*] That, notwithstanding the breach mentioned in the text referred to, there had been an entire reconciliation between Paul and Mark, farther appears from 2 Tim. iv. 11, and Philem. ver. 24.

[d] *Jesus who is called Justus.*] Mr. Fleming thinks that good man changed his name from a principle of conscience, as questioning at least whether it was lawful to wear that which had been Divinely appropriated to the great Saviour; which seems to have been his own opinion. Flem. Christol. Vol. III. p. 604. But I can scarce think he would have exchanged it for that of Justus, which rather seems to be an additional name which the respect of his friends had bestowed upon him.

SECT. VIII.

Col. IV. 12

amidst all temptations and dangers, *perfect and complete in the whole will of God*, and may retain the purity of the gospel, unadulterated with those debasing mixtures which some are so eager to introduce. I am fully persuaded, that he is thus mindful of you at the throne of grace; *for I* can *bear witness to him, that he has great zeal for you, and for* all *those* Christians that are in your parts, and particularly *in* the neighbouring cities of *Laodicea and Hierapolis.*

perfect, and complete in all the will of God.

13 For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

14 *Luke, the beloved physician,*[e] who is deservedly dear to you and to me, and to all our fellow Christians, *salutes you; and Demas* likewise, who hitherto continues with me.

14 Luke the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

15 *Salute*, in my name, *the* Christian *brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church that is in his house:* for I know there are several Christians, who either reside in it, or meet for social worship there.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 *And*, as I am desirous that my writings during my confinement may be as useful as possible to my Christian friends, I desire that *when this epistle is read* publicly *to you* in your religious assembly, as (having inscribed it to the whole society,) I am assured it will be, you *cause it also to be read to the church of the Laodiceans; and* for that purpose take proper methods for conveying it immediately to them; *that so you may also* the more easily have an opportunity to *read that* which I have written to them, and which I doubt not but you may procure *from Laodicea*; as, on your imparting this to them, they will see it is my request that it may be communicated to you.[f]

16 And when this epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

[e] *Luke the beloved physician.*] From comparing this with ver. 11, where Paul says he had no fellow-labourer of the *circumcision*, but those whom he had named, the late Lord Barrington concludes, that Luke was a *proselyte of the gate* before he was converted to Christianity. And I think it may be fairly concluded that he was not a Jew.

[f] *Read that from Laodicea.*] Commentators are much divided as to the interpretation of these words. The ancients generally thought the epistle here referred to was that to the Ephesians, which being inscribed to the chief church in those parts, (and, as Archbishop Wake, in his Preface to the Apostolic Fathers, p. 94, by a much more modern name, calls it the metropolis,) might be communicated to the Laodiceans, and so to their Colossians. But there is no direction of this kind in that epistle, and it would have been much more natural for Paul to have directed these Colossians to have sent to Ephesus for an epistle inscribed to that church.—There is no ground however to imagine that it refers (as some thought) to an epistle written by the apostle Paul from Laodicea, where it is reasonable to conclude, from Coloss. ii. 1, that he had

SECT. VIII.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received of the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Before I conclude, I must add one word by way of particular caution and exhortation to one person amopg you, whose character is of great *and* public importance. *Say* therefore *to Archippus*[s], in my name and in your own, *take heed to the ministry, which thou hast received in the* name and by the authority of the *Lord* Jesus Christ, *that thou fulfil it* with diligence and care; for the consequence of neglecting this high and holy office, after having so solemnly undertaken it will be infinitely dangerous and fatal. Col. IV. 17.

18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

Thus far I have used the pen of a friend; but now I add *the salutation of* [*me*] *Paul*, written *with mine own hand*, as a token of the genuineness of the epistle. *Remember my bonds*, and bear me upon your heart with that affection which you owe to an apostle, and to one who is now a confessor for the truth he hath preached. *Grace* [*be*] *with you* from Christ, the fountain of it. *Amen.* You have my repeated and most affectionate prayers for it, and may the God of grace and peace confirm it by his most efficacious Amen. 18

never been; nor can I think it likely, that it means an *epistle* written to him *from the church of Laodicea*, which the apostle could not have ordered to be read publicly in the church in the same manner with his own epistle.—Others have much more probably supposed, that it was an *epistle* written *to the Laodiceans*, by St. Paul, though the epistle extant under that name (which may be seen in Fabricius, Cod. Apocr. Vol. VII. p. 870,) has nothing so remarkable in its contents as to make it at all requisite for this church to send for it; and indeed has not any of the spirit and flame of the apostle Paul, or any thing worthy of him but what is borrowed from his other epistles, though it be even shorter than that to Philemon. We may rather conclude it to be *now lost*, for all the epistles which the apostles ever wrote are not preserved, any more than all the *words* and *actions* of our blessed Lord. (Compare John xx. 30, and xxi. 25.)—If this be not allowed, we must refer it (as above) to the epistle to the Ephesians, which might be intended, as some think, to be communicated as a *circular epistle*, and a copy of it ordered to be sent to Laodicea, from whence, as it lay nearer to them, the Colossian might more easily obtain it than from Ephesus. This has the rather been supposed, as the epistle to the Ephesians is the only one of all Paul's epistles that has nothing in it peculiarly adapted to the state of that church to which it is directed, but has much of common concernment to all Christians, especially to the Gentile converts. And in this case it is no wonder the apostle should make such a reference, as there is so great a resemblance between this epistle to the Colossians and that to the Ephesians, and as so many of the sentiments only suggested here are more largely illustrated there. Compare Col. i 26, with Eph. iii. 9, Col. ii 13, with Eph. ii. 1, &c. Col. iii. 11, with Eph. i. 10, &c. Col. iii. 18, 19, with Eph. v. 22—24, and the like.

[s] *Say to Archippus.*] This seems an intimation that Archippus, whoever he were, was not so *diligent* and *active* in the prosecution of his *ministry* as could have been wished. But that his fault was, entangling himself with Jewish disputations, as some have supposed, is so far from being evident, that I see nothing to make it at all probable.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VIII.

THE friendly disposition of St. Paul fails not to shew itself in the close, as well as entrance of every epistle, and indeed runs through all the parts of each. It cannot but give some pleasure to the pious reader, to whom the memory of such a servant of Christ will always be precious, to find that there were some even of the circumcision that were comforts to him in his affliction;
Ver. 11. as well as that John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, was so thoroughly reconciled, and made one of his most agreeable and useful friends; though there was a time when Paul thought it inconsistent with prudence and duty to admit him as a companion. *He that reproveth a man shall afterwards find more favour than he who flattereth with the tongue.* (Prov. xxviii. 23.) And if the faithfulness of plain rebukes may be the means of recovering our brethren to a sense of their duty, they will no doubt be sensible of the obligation, and it will add firmness and endearment to future friendship.

When Epaphras was at a distance from his brethren at Colosse, he was not only praying for them, but, as the word signifies, *wrestling with God in his prayers on their account*; an important evidence of his Christian affection for them. And how well were his petitions chosen! That they might not only be sincerely good, as they already were, but perfect and complete in all the will of God; that there might be in their hearts and actions a more entire conformity to it. May that be our character and happiness to have respect to all God's commandments, and to carry our regards to them as far as we possibly can.

Commendable, and perfectly consistent with the strictest modesty, was the concern which the apostle expresses, that his epistles might be diffused as far as possible, and that Christians in different societies might receive the benefit of them. And indeed they turn so much upon matters of universal importance, that they are admirably calculated for the edification of those who may live in the most distant countries and ages. Surely there cannot be a more sacrilegious attempt upon Christian liberty and piety than to take them away from the common people, to whom Paul expressly ordered they should be publicly read: nor can there be greater madness than to pretend to guard men from error and heresy, by concealing from them writings which the Holy Spirit himself suggested, to lead them to truth and holiness.

We know not what there might be so particular in the character or circumstances of Archippus as to require the solemn admonition with which the epistle closes. But, whatever the occasion of it were, it certainly suggests a most useful and important thought to all the ministers of the gospel. It is of the Lord

Jesus Christ that they receive their ministry; to him they are quickly to render a strict account of it. May they all therefore take heed to it! May they be sensible of the importance of the trust, and have grace to be faithful in it; that they may give up their account with the joy of that steward, who, having approved his fidelity on earth, shall receive his reward in heaven. Amen! SECT. VIII.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

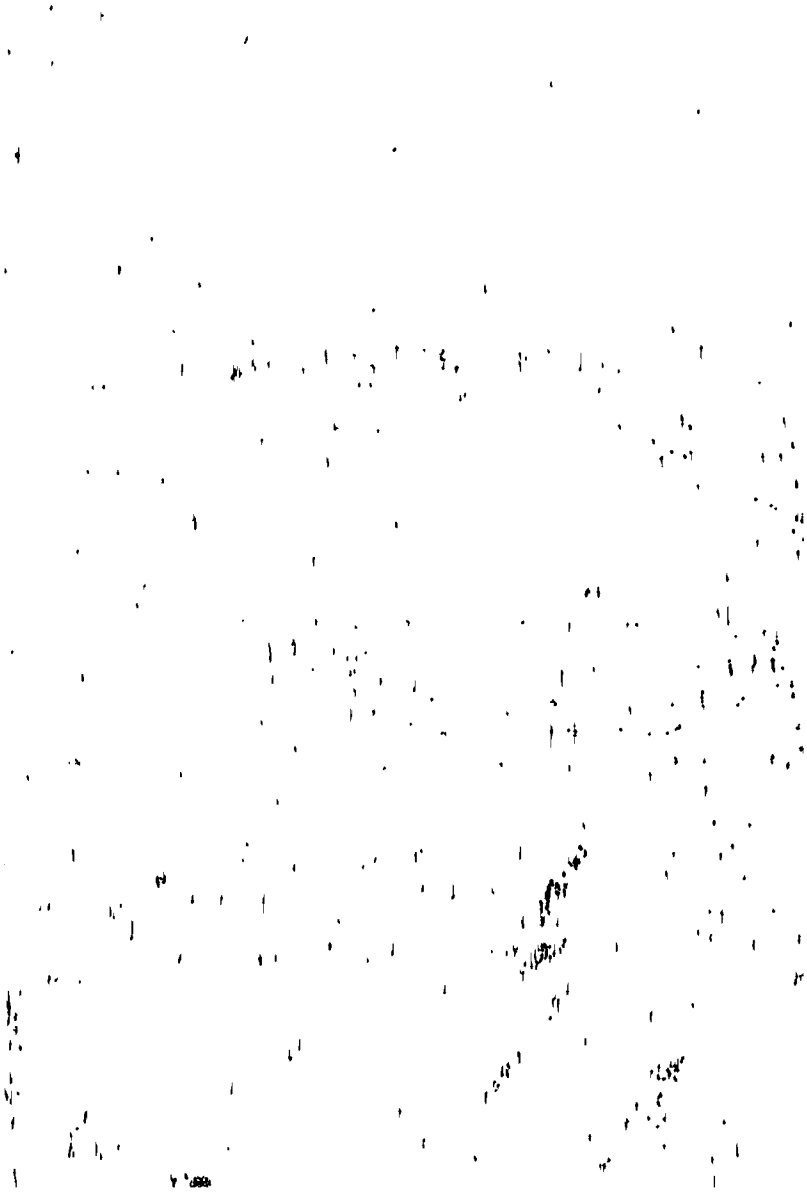
FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THIS epistle is addressed to the inhabitants of Thessalonica, a large populous city, the metropolis of Macedonia. It stood upon the Thermaian bay, which was part of the Ægean sea, and was so called from Thermæ, the ancient name of the city.

It appears from the history of the Acts (chap. xvii. 1,) that the Christian religion was planted here by Paul and Silas, soon after they left Philippi, where they had met with such unworthy treatment. (Compare Acts xvi. 24, with 1 Thess. ii. 2.) At their first entrance, they preached with so much success, that great numbers of the Gentiles, and some of the Jews, who were settled in that city, embraced the gospel with the utmost readiness. (Compare 1 Thess. i. 5, 9.) But the unbelieving Jews, animated by the same inveterate spirit with their brethren in Judea, stirred up the idolatrous inhabitants against the apostle and his Christian friends, and in a riotous manner assaulted the house where some of them were assembled; but, not finding Paul and Silas, as they expected, they carried Jason and some others of the brethren before the magistrate, who took security for their good behaviour, and then dismissed them. In the mean while, the apostle and his companion having been concealed by their friends till the storm was a little abated, were

obliged to leave them abruptly, and go in the night to Berea: where for some time they met with a very favourable reception; but were soon disturbed by the malice of these restless enemies who pursued them thither; and the apostle had once more the mortification to leave a place that seemed to promise so rich a harvest. Acts xvii. 1—14.

But the opposition which these bigots made to the gospel, and which they continued after the apostle's departure, (1 Thess. ii. 14,) was not sufficient to shake the faith of the new converts; who, as appears from this epistle, (chap. i. 3—10; ii. 13, 14,) distinguished themselves above all the other churches for the zeal and constancy with which they adhered to the Christian cause, and the honourable character they maintained. No wonder therefore the apostle should express in such strong terms his esteem and affection for them, and the satisfaction it gave him to see such happy fruits of his labours.

It cannot be certainly determined from the history, what stay the apostle made at Thessalonica. Some have imagined, from Acts xvii. 3, that he was there only three weeks: but as it appears that, during his abode in that city, he not only wrought with his own hands to procure a subsistence, (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8,) but also received supplies more than once from Philippi, (compare Phil. iv. 16,) it is much more probable that, after the Jews had discovered such an invincible prejudice against the gospel, he desisted from disputing or teaching in their synagogues after the third sabbath, and then preached for some time among the Gentiles, before he was driven out of the city. See Vol. III. § 39, note *a*, p. 249.

However, as it is certain his stay was not very considerable, and as he had left his Christian friends there in so much distress, on his as well as their own account, he sent Timothy to them from Athens, (for which place he had sailed immediately upon his leaving Berea;) to confirm them in their attachment to the gospel, and comfort them under their concern for his sufferings. (Chap. iii. 1—5.) Timothy, at his return, found the

apostle at Corinth, (Acts xviii. 5.) where he continued near two years; (Acts xviii. 11.) from whence it has generally been concluded, and with great reason, that this epistle, in which he takes such particular notice of the agreeable account he had received of their character from Timothy, (chap. iii. 6.) was wrote from thence, not long after his arrival; (compare chap. ii. 17.) which will fix the date of it about the year of our Lord 52, or the 12th of the emperor Claudius. See Vol. III. § 41, note [t] and [k], p. 270, 271.

The apostle's design in this epistle is, in general, to confirm the Thessalonians in their adherence to the Christian faith, and to engage them from the sufferings they had already endured in that cause, and the extraordinary character they had hitherto maintained, to make still greater advances in religion, and become yet more eminent in every branch of the Christian temper.

In pursuance of this design, having, in the inscription of the epistle, joined Timothy and Sylvanus (or Silas, who had assisted him in establishing the church at Thessalonica) with himself, the apostle expresses his great satisfaction in the sincerity with which the Thessalonians embraced the gospel when it was first preached to them, and in the exemplary character they had since maintained; to which he assures them all the churches bore an honourable testimony, and by which they had greatly advanced the credit of their Christian profession. Chap. i. throughout.

And, in order to preserve his influence with them, and consequently to add the greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the courage and fidelity with which he had preached the gospel at his first entrance among them, in spite of all the danger to which his zeal exposed him; and appeals to them for the unexceptionable and disinterested manner in which he had behaved towards them while he continued there, and the tender affectionate concern he had always shewn for their religious interests; chap. ii. 1—12.—The reflection upon the pains he had taken with them, naturally led him to acknowledge, with the utmost thank-

fulness, the happy success that had attended his labours, in their conversion to the Christian faith, which they openly and courageously professed, notwithstanding all the difficulties and dangers they were obliged to encounter. He observes to them, that he himself, and his fellow-Christians in Judea, had met with the same ill-treatment from the perverseness of their own countrymen, who opposed his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles; and assures them, that though he had, by the malice of his enemies, been unwillingly detained from them longer than he intended, he felt the same warmth of affection for them, and rejoiced in them as his glory and his crown; ver. 13, to the end.

As a farther proof of his regard, the apostle informs them, that when he came to Athens, he was so much concerned, lest, being discouraged by his sufferings, they should be tempted to cast off their profession, that he could not forbear sending Timothy to comfort and strengthen them; and expresses in very strong terms the sensible pleasure he felt, in the midst of all his afflictions, from the agreeable account he received of their faith and love; to which he adds, that he was continually praying for their farther establishment in religion, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. Chap. iii. throughout.

The apostle, having thus given the Thessalonians a sufficient testimony of his sincere regard, proceeds to renew the practical exhortations he had given them in the name of Christ, while he continued with them; recommending, in particular, chastity, in opposition to all kinds of uncleanness for which the idolatrous Gentiles were so notorious; justice, in opposition to all manner of fraud and dishonesty; charity, in which he acknowledges they already excelled; and a diligent application to their proper business, joined with a prudent behaviour towards their heathen neighbours. Chap. iv. 1—12.——In order to comfort them under the loss of some of their Christian friends, of whose death it is probable the apostle might have heard by Timothy, he assures them, that those who were fallen asleep in

Jesus should be raised again at the last day, and, together with those that remained alive, should be caught up to meet their Lord, and share his triumph, ver. 13, to the end.——And, having thus laid a solid foundation on which to build their hope, he takes occasion to press upon them the necessity of preparing for so awful an event, that it might not take them unawares; and represents the peculiar obligations they were under to sobriety and watchfulness, from the superior light and knowledge they enjoyed, and the hopes they were taught to entertain from the death and resurrection of Christ. Chap. v. 1—11.

The apostle, in the conclusion of his epistle, recommends to them a respectful behaviour to their ministers, and lays down some directions for their conduct towards persons of different tempers and characters in the church, adding other practical precepts of a more general nature; and, having offered up a solemn petition for their farther advancement and stedfastness in religion, he closes with his usual benediction, ver. 12, to the end of the epistle.

From this analysis of the epistle, the reader cannot but have observed, what a paternal affection and concern the apostle discovers for these new converts: and it is remarkable, with how much address he improves all that influence which his zeal and fidelity in their service must naturally give him, to inculcate upon them the precepts of the gospel, and persuade them to act agreeably to their sacred character. This was the grand point he kept always in view; and to which every thing else was made subservient. Nothing appears, in any part of his writings, like a design to establish his own reputation, or to make use of his ascendency over his Christian friends, to answer any secular purposes of his own: on the contrary, in this, and in his other epistles, he discovers a most generous disinterested regard for their welfare, expressly disclaiming all authority over their consciences, and appealing to them that he had chose to maintain himself by the labour of his own hands, rather than prove burdensome to the churches, or give the least colour for a suspi-

cion, that, under pretence of zeal for the gospel, and concern for their improvement, he was carrying on any private sinister views.

The discovery of so excellent a temper, as it tends greatly to raise our idea of the apostle, so it must be allowed to carry with it a strong presumptive argument in favour of the doctrines he taught, and consequently of the truth of Christianity itself: for he evidently appears to have been governed by the very same principles he recommends to others, and, by their influence, to have been raised above all regard to his temporal interests, and every motive that could come in competition with the honour of God, and the advancement of religion in the world. And indeed whoever reads over St. Paul's epistles with attention, and enters into the spirit with which they were wrote, will discern such intrinsic characters in their genuineness, and the Divine authority of the doctrines they contain, as will perhaps produce in him a stronger conviction than all the external evidence with which they are attended. To which we may add, that the exact coincidence, observable between the many allusions to particular facts, in this as well as in other epistles, and the account of the facts themselves, as they are recorded in the history of the Acts, is a remarkable confirmation of the truth of each. Compare vol. III. § 39, note *a*, p. 249.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE THESSALONIANS.

SECT. I.

The apostle Paul, after the usual salutations, expresses his joy in the character of the Thessalonians to whom he wrote, and in the credit they did to their Christian profession, by a behaviour so worthy of it. 1 Thess. I. 1, *throughout.*

1 THESSALONIANS, I. 1.

1 THESS. I. 1.
PAUL, and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, *which is* in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PAUL and Sylvanus, otherwise called Silas, *and Timothy*, all well known as the servants and ministers of Christ, join in this address *to the* beloved and happy *church*, which he by his grace hath lately founded among you *of the Thessalonians*, who have now the honour to stand *in* an intimate and dear relation to *God, the Father* of all true Believers, *and* to *the Lord Jesus Christ*, our common and adorable Saviour. And we all most sincerely wish *grace and peace unto you*, in the richest abundance, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

SECT. I. 1 Thess. I. 1.

2 We give thanks

We think ourselves obliged to *give thanks to*

SECT. I.

God always with one accord *for you all, making* continual *mention of you in our* daily *prayers.* *Incessantly remembering* in every address to
1 Thess. I. 3. the Divine throne *your work of faith*, the readiness with which you embraced the gospel of Christ; the vigour with which you declared your dependence upon it; *and*, in consequence of that dependence, your *labour of love*, the charitable and affectionate zeal with which you embarked in the interests of his persecuted servants: *and* your *patience* in result *of* that blessed *hope* which was brought unto you *by* the gospel and grace of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, and solemnly professed *before God, even our Father*, who will not suffer the graces which he hath wrought in you by his blessed Spirit to fail of their proper rewards.[a]

to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father:

4 And this we write with all freedom and endearment, *knowing, beloved brethren, your* participation in the *election of God*, and fully persuaded that you are in the number of those whom he will finally own as his chosen people, for whom before the foundation of the world he
5 had prepared a kingdom. Of which, blessed be his name, we have the most important and satisfactory evidence; *because our gospel*, that is, the gospel which we preach, and which was solemnly committed to our charge, *came not to you in word only*, so as to be a mere empty sound, or to convey only amusing ideas to your mind, *but also in power*, so as to make very deep and powerful impressions on your hearts; *and* indeed such impressions as could only be the result of its coming to you *in the* power of the *Holy Ghost*, whose miraculous and gracious influence concurred to add force to it. *And* then it is no wonder that it came *in much assurance*, so that you could not possibly doubt of its truth, when you thus saw its evidence, and felt its efficacy. And its success was farther promoted by the good example which we who preached it were enabled to give; *as you well know*, and I am confident, will never forget, *what manner of persons we were among you*, what vigour and zeal we

4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

[a] *Work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope.*] All these are plainly Hebraisms for *active faith, laborious love*, and *patient hope*, and might very properly have been so translated.

SECT. I.

exerted for your conversion, and how we conducted ourselves in the whole of our behaviour, with respect to you, and all around us, as well as with what fortitude we faced all the persecutions we were called to encounter *for your sakes.* 1 Thess. 1. 5.

6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

And the happy consequence of all was, that *you* 6 *became imitators of us, and* I bless God I may add therein *of the Lord* Jesus Christ too, both in the holiness of your lives, and in the courage and patience with which you endured those sufferings which lay in the way of your duty; *having received the word in much affliction*, from the rage and fury of your unreasonable enemies, and yet *with joy of the Holy Ghost*; rejoicing, under his powerful influences, in the reception of that holy religion to which you were so early called to make such great and important sacrifices.

7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

So that indeed *ye* soon *became* eminent 7 in the churches of Christ, and *examples to all the believers in Macedonia, and in* the more distant province of *Achaia*,[b] where the Corinthian converts, famous as they soon were, (1 Cor. i. 7,) heard of your religious character with pleasure and emulation.

8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak any thing.

For from you the word of the 8 *Lord sounded forth*, and you were eager, by your messengers, to spread the joyful tidings of the gospel, *not only in* your own borders of *Macedonia and* in *Achaia*, with which you had an easy correspondence, *but also* wherever Providence gave you any access; so that, *in every* remoter *place*, the fame and effect of *your faith toward God* and the Lord Jesus Christ *came in such a degree as made it* almost *unnecessary for us particularly to recount any thing* of your conversion, or progress in the truth.

9 For they themselves shew of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from

For they themselves, among whom we came, *declare* it to us *concerning* you, and make it the subject of their pleasing conversation with *us*, and with one another, *what a* wonderful *kind of entrance we had among you*, in our first visit, *and* what a reception you gave us; that is, *how ye turned to God from* those contemptible *idols*, in the worship of

[b] *In Macedonia and Achaia*] The apostle mentions these parts as he had just been travelling through them, before he came to Corinth, from whence (as we have shewn in the Introduction, p. 287,) he wrote this epistle. Compare Acts xvii. 14, 15; xviii. 1.

SECT. 1.

which ye had been educated, with a firm resolution at all events *to serve the living and true God*, with that diligence and zeal which his service so justly demands. *And* you found yourselves disposed, by your growing knowledge of him, *to* lay aside all immoderate attachments to the interests and concerns of this present life, that, with fixed faith, and cheerful expectation, ye might *wait for* the triumphant coming of *his Son from heaven*; of that illustrious Son, *whom*, as a proof of his Divine mission and designation to the office of universal Judge, *he hath raised from the dead*, and now exalted to his own right-hand; [*even*] *Jesus*, the long expected and ever to be adored Saviour, *who rescues us from the wrath* which is assuredly *to come* upon all impenitent sinners, and makes us, in consequence of our faith in him, not only safe from that flaming ruin, but secure of possessing an happiness complete and eternal.

1 Thess. i. 10.

idols, to serve the living and true God.

10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 9 WE see here a compendious view of the Christian character. It is to *turn from idols*, from every thing which we have loved and esteemed, from every thing which we have pursued and trusted in an irregular degree, *to serve the living and true God*; under a real sense of his infinite perfections and glories. It is 10 turning also to *Jesus*, his Son, as *saving us from the wrath to come*: from a deep conviction of our being justly exposed to wrath by our transgressions against God, to seek rescue and refuge in *Christ*, as *delivering* us from it, by his *atonement* and grace, and completing that deliverance by Almighty power, in the day of his final triumph. It is to look and wait with unshaken faith and with holy joy for *Jesus the Son of God from heaven*: keeping the eye of our souls habitually directed towards him, the loins of our mind continually girded up, and ourselves as *servants who look for their Lord's coming*. In the mean time, may we 3 maintain the *work of faith*, and *labour of love*, and *patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, even our Father*.

If this be the effect of our receiving the gospel, it will evidently prove that it is come to us, not only in word, but in 4, 5 power, and in the Holy Ghost; and it may give us abundant assurance of our interest in God, and cause us by the happiest tokens to know our election of him. Whatever afflictions may in that case be allotted to us, while we hereby become followers of the apostles and of Christ, we may rejoice in the Lord.

The ministers of Christ will rejoice in such an entrance among their people, as shall produce these blessed consequences, and the word of God will be sounded forth with the greatest advantage by those who are pleading for its truth, efficacy, and importance, by this silent but powerful eloquence. May this character be every where more prevalent among those that call themselves Christians, and may *grace* and *peace from God our Father*, and from the *Lord Jesus Christ*, *be with all* in whom it is found.

SECT. I. Verse 9 8 1

SECT. II.

The apostle leads the Thessalonians to reflect upon the manner in which he and his brethren in the Christian ministry behaved among them when they visited them at first, and laid the foundation of a church in their city. 1 Thess. II. 1—12.

1 THESSALONIANS II. 1.

1 Thess. II. 1. FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

I HAVE been mentioning the encouragement our ministry among you first met with, and the blessed effects that attended it. But I need not insist more largely upon them, *for ye yourselves know*, my *brethren*, and I am persuaded you can never forget, *the entrance that we had unto you*; with what demonstration of Divine agency in and by us it was attended, and what a powerful effect it had upon your minds, so *that it was not in vain*. It was not a transient and trifling amusement, but solemn in itself, and attended with important consequences and effects, which will be everlasting. *But* the recollection is so delightful to my mind, that you must permit me, known as it is, to lead back my own thoughts to the review, and to remind you, how, *even when we had* just *before suffered* the greatest indignities, *and* had *been* so *injuriously treated*, *as you know*, *at Philippi*, where we were stripped and scourged by the common beadle, and thrust into prison, with our feet set fast in the stocks, (Acts xvi. 22—24.) we no sooner arrived among you, but *we were bold in* our humble dependence on the powerful support of *our God*; *to speak unto you* in the neighbouring city, *the gospel of God*, and this, though we were forced to do it *with* so *much contention*, because of the opposition excited against us by the perverse and unbelieving Jews. (Acts xvii.

2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

SECT. II. 1 Thess. II. 1.

SECT. II.

1 Thess. II. 3.

1—9.) And we were supported in these courageous efforts from a secret consciousness of that integrity with which our ministry was conducted; *for our exhortation* to persuade you to embrace the gospel [*was*] *not* calculated to corrupt your morals, as being founded on any principles *of deceit or of uncleanness;* we had no mercenary or sensual purposes to serve, as your idolatrous priests often have, *nor* was there *in* our management any thing of guile and *craftiness* which could fear the detection of the strictest
4 scrutiny. *But* all was fair and open, simple and artless; and *as we have been approved by God,* so far as *to be intrusted with the* invaluable treasure of his *gospel,* so we did then address you, and *so we* continue to *speak, not as pleasing men,* and accommodating our doctrine to their tastes and prejudices, *but* as endeavouring always to secure the approbation of that *God who trieth our hearts* with as great care and exactness as gold is proved in the furnace, that it may be separated from dross, or the mixture of any
5 baser metals. *Neither did we at any time deal in flattering words,* to insinuate ourselves into your affections, and soothe you in your sins, *as ye* well *know; nor* had we recourse to *a pretence of* piety, to promote the schemes of *covetousness,* often artfully conducted under the covert of religious zeal. *God* [*is*] our *witness,* that we were far above every thing of this kind, and made all such views our first sacrifice to the glory of his name and the propagation of his
6 gospel. *Nor did we seek glory* and applause *of men, neither of you nor of* any *others* among whom we laboured and conversed; nor did we press you with regard to any maintenance, *though we might have been* in some degree *burdensome as the apostles of Christ,*[a] who had authorised us to take a necessary subsistence from our hearers, as we certainly brought you what was far more valuable than any thing which we could in

3 For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God *is* witness.

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

[a] *Might have been burdensome,* &c.] The apostle evidently refers to the right he had of being *maintained* at their charge. Compare ver. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 9; 1 Tim. v. 18; 1 Cor. ix. throughout. But he was acting now on the same maxims at Corinth, (from whence he wrote this epistle) by which he had governed himself at Thessalonica. See Acts xviii. 3.

SECT. II.

7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

return have received from him. *But we were* still mild, *gentle*, and condescending *in the midst of you, even as a nurse* or mother *cherishes her own children* while hanging on her breast, and feels an inexpressible pleasure in imparting that nourishment to them with which God in his gracious providence has been pleased to furnish her. *So we, being* most *tenderly affectionate towards you, took pleasure to impart to you, not only the gospel of God*, which was lodged with us, for the food and life of our fellow creatures, *but even our own souls* too, *because ye were dear unto us*; so dear, that our hearts was in every word while we addressed you, and we could with pleasure even have laid down our lives among you, if that might have promoted the success of our ministry, and have conduced to the increase and edification of the church.

1 Thess. II. 7

8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

8

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

You had many instances of this, which need not largely rehearse; *for ye remember, brethren*, both *our labour* in the ministerial work, *and* our *toil* in our secular profession likewise; *for night and day working* at it, taking often from the rest of the night, the hours which during the day we had spent in our ministry among you, *that we might* be able to maintain ourselves, and might *not be burdensome* and expensive *to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.*

9

10 Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

And there was a consistency in the whole of our conduct, which abundantly shewed the purity of those motives from which we acted in this instance. So that *ye [are] witnesses, and God [also,]* who sees our most secret actions, and all the recesses of our heart, *how holily, and righteously, and* how *unblameably we behaved ourselves*, not only *to* the heathens around, but in our most intimate converses with *you who believe*; still preserving the same integrity, caution, and care, to avoid every occasion of offence which we maintained among those who were strangers or enemies to our religion, and so might have been most ready to seek for pretences of objecting against it.

10

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of

As ye also *know how*, and with what repeated importunity, *we were exhorting and comforting every one of you* in particular, as God gave us access

11

SECT. II.

1 Thess. II. 11.

to you; just *as a father* encourages and instructs *his children*, labouring, by every kind and endearing art of address, to form them to a wise and worthy behaviour: Thus were we animating you, and *testifying* in the most solemn manner, 12 *That ye should walk worthy of God*, and of the relation in which you have the honour to stand to him, *who hath called you* by his gospel *into his kingdom*, even to the views *and* hopes of that *glory* which he hath promised to all the faithful subjects of it.

you (as a father *doth* his children;)

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY it is not possible to conceive from any thing but the example of the great Shepherd of the sheep, a more amiable idea of the character of a gospel minister than that which is here exhibited. With what a frankness and openness of soul does the apostle appeal to their consciences, as to the integrity and benevolence of his behaviour among them, whilst, unterrified by
Ver. 2. all the indignities and inhumanities he had met with at Philippi, he immediately renewed the same combat at Thessalonica, and contended boldly with all the enemies of the gospel, not esteeming his liberty or his life, on an occasion of so great importance!

With such courage let the ministers of Christ face all danger and oppositions: with such simplicity of heart, let them deliver
3 their important message; not with deceit, uncleanness, or guile, but as those who remember that they have been put in trust with the gospel by God himself, and therefore must be solicitous *not*
4 *to please men, but God, who trieth the heart.* And may they ever be superior to those views of avarice, ambition, or popular ap-
5, 6 plause, which should lead them to sacrifice truth to the affection or favour of men, or even to the fear of being thought to do it. And let them, with all this intrepidity and firmness of soul, put
7 on a gentleness and sweetness of disposition; a gentleness like that with which a nurse cherishes her children. While their people, like *new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.* (1 Pet. ii. 2.) Let ministers, with a natural tenderness, draw forth that precious nourishment to
8 them, as imparting even their own souls unto them, and willing to wear out, or, if such should be the will of God, to sacrifice their lives in such a service.

Let them particularly endeavour by all prudent care, suitable to the circumstances in which God has fixed them, not to make themselves burdensome to the people in temporal things, nor, under the pretence of a Divine mission, to tyrannize over their

consciences; but behave with such integrity and such sanctity, that they may be enabled cheerfully to appeal to God as a witness of it, and may also have a testimony in the breast of each of their flock. And O that the entrance of such ministers among their people, and their labours with them, may not be in vain; but that the blessed consequence of all the charges, entreaties, and consolations, they are addressing to them may be this, that they may walk worthy of God, worthy of that kingdom and glory, to the views and blessings of which he hath condescended to call them! Then will all the fatigues of their office sit light upon them, while they see the blessed purposes of it answered. Then will they finish their course with joy, and bless God with their dying breath, that he hath chosen them to an office, the most laborious, and perhaps, in secular views, the least advantageous of any in which persons of liberal education use to engage.

SECT. III. Verse 6 12

SECT. III.

The apostle goes on to bless God for the readiness with which the Thessalonians received the gospel, notwithstanding the persecution raised against them by their own countrymen, as well as the perverse opposition of the Jews, and assures them of his continued affection, though he had been hindered from visiting them so soon as he intended. 1 Thess. II. 13—*to the end.*

1 THESSALONIANS II. 13.

1 THESS. II. 13. FOR this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not *as* the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

THUS we laboured, and thus we behaved ourselves among you, and we are thankful that we were enabled in so conscientious a manner to discharge our duty. And *for this cause also we give thanks to God incessantly, that when ye received the word of God, which ye heard from us, ye received* [*it*] *not* with indifference and neglect, not with doubt and uncertainty, [*as*] if it had been merely *the* precarious *word of men*, an artful invention, or uncertain scheme of human philosophy, *but (as it is in truth) the* very *word of God* himself, the veracity of which is beyond all dispute or suspicion; of *which* there is this farther proof, that it *worketh* so *efficaciously in you who believe*, and produces such an happy change in your character as may abundantly attest its Divine origin. *For you, brethren*, as soon as ever you embraced it, im-

SECT. III. 1 Thess. II. 13.

14 For ye, brethren, became follow-

SECT. III.

1 Thess. II. 14.

mediately *became imitators* of the heroic behaviour and conduct *of the churches of God which are in Judea, in Christ Jesus*, as being under the influences of the same Spirit with them, though you had not been eye-witnesses of their example. *For you also*, with the like intrepidity of resolution, *suffered the same things from those of your own* tribe and *country*, (Acts xvii. 5.) *as they* [*did*] *of* their countrymen *the Jews;*

15 *Who* treated them so rigorously and cruelly, as the vilest of apostates. They call themselves indeed the peculiar people of God, but act in a manner most unworthy that character, for they *both killed the Lord Jesus* Christ, *and their own prophets*, who foretold his appearance, and whom God in many distant ages of their commonwealth raised up unto them. *And*, on the same principles also they *have persecuted us*, when we came among them as Divine messengers; *and*, on the whole, *please not God*, though they pretend to know him so well, and boast so loudly of their interest in him; but in consequence of the wrong notions they form of him, greatly offend him, *and are contrary to all men*, full of contempt and malignity against all other nations, and behave towards them in the most

16 perverse and unfriendly manner.[a] Of which morose and odious behaviour, this is a remarkable instance, that they are continually *forbidding us*, the apostles and messengers of God, *to speak* and preach the gospel *to the Gentiles, that they might be saved;* and by thus setting themselves against the darling scheme of Divine Providence, and opposing the most important, even the eternal interests of mankind, they seem to act as if they desired *to fill up* the measure of *their sins continually. But* Divine *wrath is* speedily *coming upon them*, and will be carried *to the greatest extremity*, not at Jerusalem only,

ers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

[a] *Contrary to all men.*] It is well known what invincible prejudices the Jews in general entertained against all other nations; and Elsner has produced several passages from Tacitus and other heathen writers, in which they are represented as *bearing an inveterate hatred against all the rest of mankind.* (Elsner, Observ. Vol. II. p. 274.) And nothing certainly could afford a stronger proof of this malignant temper, than that perverse opposition to so benevolent a scheme as the gospel, for which the apostle passes this severe censure upon them.

but every where else, in their various settlements in heathen countries[b]. SECT. III.

17 But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

But we, brethren, though necessarily *separated from you for a very little season*, and as it were for a few hours[c], *in person*, but *not in heart*, *being exceedingly desirous to see your face again*, *endeavoured it to the utmost.* 1 Thess. ii. 17.

18 Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us.

Therefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul in particular, *once and a second time*, *but Satan*, the great enemy of our usefulness and comfort, *hath* hitherto *hindered us*, by the many difficulties he laid in our way. 18

19 For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?

But we will be sure to take the first opportunity of doing it; *for what* [*is*] *our hope* of appearing another day, with comfort before the tribunal of Christ, *or* what our *joy*, *or* what the *crown of rejoicing*, which we expect then to wear? [*are*] *not ye also* among many others, whom Divine grace has given us as the fruits of our ministry; whom we hope for the honour of presenting *before our Lord Jesus Christ, at* the day of *his* final *appearance?* 19

20 For ye are our glory and joy.

For ye are now one of the most considerable churches which I have been the happy instrument of planting; and I trust ye will then appear as *our glory and* our *joy*, as the seals God hath been pleased to set to my labours, and as amiable friends in whose converse and love I hope to be for ever happy. 20

[b] *Not only at Jerusalem, &c.*] Though the remarkable circumstances which attended the destruction of Jerusalem, so particularly represented by Josephus, who was an eye-witness of them, and so exactly corresponding to our Lord's prediction, (see Vol. II. sect. clxi.) have fixed the attention of Christians, chiefly on that catastrophe; yet it is well known, that vast numbers of the Jewish nation were soon after destroyed in other provinces of the Roman empire, particularly under Trajan and Adrian: under the former, 460,000 men in Egypt and Cyprus, and under the latter, above 580,000, as Xiphilinus informs us from Dio; and the learned Mr. Lowman supposes these events to be referred to in the second *apocalyptick seal*, Rev. vi. 4. Compare Vol. II. sect. clxi. note[m].

[c] *For a very little season*, or for a few hours.] The original is πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, *for an hour's time*: which is so figurative an expression, that I chose rather to express the sense in the paraphrase, than to follow the Greek literally, especially, as ὥρα has a signification rather more extensive than *hour*. It was several years before the apostle returned to them, but his mind was full of the ideas of *eternity*, which did, as it were, annihilate any period of mortal life. Dr. Whitby infers from this expression, that this epistle was writ quickly after Paul's leaving Thessalonica, and consequently at Corinth, the first place where he made any long stay. The word ἀπορφανισθέντες, in this connection, strongly expresses the apostle's *affection* for them (compare John xv. 18, Gr. Vol. II. sect. clxxiv. note[e]), and *concern* to leave them in an unsettled state. Compare chap. iii. 1.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. III. MAY Divine grace teach our souls ever to distinguish between the authority of the word of men, and the word of God; that we may always set them at a due distance from each other, and may feel that peculiar energy of the Divine word with which it operates in all them that believe! May we experience this, whatever be the consequences, yea though we should be exposed to sufferings, severe as those which Jews or heathens at first inflicted on the professors, or even on the preachers, of the gospel!

Verse 13

14 Adored be that power of Divine grace that went along with it, so that when the envious disciples of Moses, after having slain
15 the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as their own prophets, forbad his messengers to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, these faithful ambassadors of health and life feared none of their threatenings or cruelties, but courageously declared the matter as it was, *testifying both to Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Acts xx. 21.)

The Jews in the mean time filled up the measure of their sins,
16 till wrath came upon them to the uttermost. And so will all the opposition that is made to the gospel end to those who are implacable and obstinate in it. They who believe not that Christ is He, shall die in their sins. *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.* (John viii. 24; Mat. xxi. 44.)

19 Let the ministers of Christ, however Satan may attempt to hinder them, go on faithfully and courageously in their work,
18 and watch over the souls which they have gained. When absent from them in body, let them not be absent in heart; but let them
17 be thinking of their state, and often caring and praying for them: *for what is their hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing* in the day of the Lord, but the souls which God shall graciously give them as spiritual children, or to whom he shall render them useful, for training them up in those ways of holiness in which, by the blessing of God upon the labours of others, they might be so happy as to find them? May God give many such to all who *serve him with their spirit in the gospel of his Son;* and, in the views of their increasing piety, may they daily anticipate the
20 glory and the joy with which they hope at last to deliver them to their Divine Master!

SECT. IV.

As a farther illustration of his love, the apostle informs the Thessalonians of his care to send Timothy to them from Athens, and of the great pleasure with which he received the tidings which that evangelist brought him; he also assures them that he was continually praying for them, and for an opportunity of making them another visit, in order to promote their edification, which lay so near his heart. 1 Thess. III. *throughout.*

1 THESSALONIANS III. 1.

1 THESS. III. 1. WHEREFORE, when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone:

SUCH is the affection we feel for you, and *therefore*, as we were by persecution separated from you, while as yet your church was in a very tender and unsettled state, (Acts xvii. 10.) we could not but be solicitous, to be more particularly informed how it fared with you. And, *being able no longer to endure* the uncertainty in which we were with relation to you, *we acquiesced in* the uncomfortable circumstances of *being left alone*[a] *at Athens*, where we had some peculiar need of the countenance and comfort of an approved companion and friend; *And sent Timothy, our* dear *brother, and a* faithful *servant of God, and* whom we highly esteem, as *our* diligent and affectionate *fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ*, whom you had formerly known under that character;[b] we parted with him, inconvenient as it was, for your sakes, *that*, by making you a visit, at a time when we concluded you so much needed it, *he might strengthen and comfort you*, exhort and advise you as occasion required, *concerning* the evidences of *your faith* in general, and any particular branches of it in which you might need farther instruction. *That no man might be shaken* and discouraged from his adherence to the Christian profession and hope, *by* the greatest severity of

SECT. IV. 1 Thess. III. 1.

2 And sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith;

3 That no man should be moved by

[a] *Left alone.*] It seems from this circumstance, that Silas was absent from Paul while that apostle was at Athens, though some have been of a different opinion. Compare Acts xviii. 5, which seems farther to confirm that fact.

[b] *Fellow-labourer.*] It appears from Acts xvii. 14, that Timothy had been in those parts before, as *Paul's fellow-labourer*, and so no doubt but he was known to the Thessalonians, and his coming on this occasion would be the more agreeable to them.

SECT. IV.

1 Thess. III. 3.

these afflictions with which we are surrounded; *for ye yourselves know that we are appointed to these*, and that one part of the scheme of God in establishing the Christian church, was to raise a society of men, who should glorify his name, and illustrate the force of true religion, by enduring the greatest extremities in its defence

4 with fortitude and cheerfulness. *For even when we were with you, we* did not flatter you with any vain hopes of an easy and pleasureable life, but plainly and candidly *told you, before* you engaged with us, *that we should* certainly *be afflicted, as it came to pass* in fact; *and ye* well *know*, from the very nature of things, and from comparing the religion you have embraced with the tempers, prejudices, and interests of men, that there was the greatest reason to ex-

5 pect it. *For this cause also, being* (as I was just saying) *no longer able to endure* the uncertainty I was in with regard to persons that in such circumstances lay so near my heart, *I sent to know* the state of *your faith* under such violent assaults, *lest by any means the tempter*, taking the advantage of the weakness of human nature, *might have tempted you* to suppress the conviction of your minds, or at least the public profession of your faith, so as to return to idolatry again; *and* so *our labour should* with respect to you *have been in vain*, as in such a case it certainly would have been, whatever secret persuasion of the

6 truth of religion might have remained. *But now Timothy, having returned to us from you, and* having *brought to us the good tidings of your* continued *faith, and* fervent abounding *love, and* assured us *that ye have always a good* and affectionate *remembrance of us*, as your spiritual father in Christ, *greatly desiring*, if Providence might permit it, speedily *to see us* again, *as we*

7 *also* assuredly do [*to see*] *you; We were hereby comforted, brethren, concerning you*, and found the happy effects of these heart-reviving consolations, *in all our tribulation and necessity*, which grew more supportable to us than it would otherwise have been, *by means of* this happy assurance of *your faith*, which God hath blessed us as the

8 instrument of producing. *For now we* do

these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

5 For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

6 But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

7 Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

8 For now we live

if ye stand fast in the Lord.

indeed *live*,[c] we relish and enjoy life, *if ye stand fast in the* gospel and grace of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, retaining strenuously that holy profession and precious faith which ye have embraced: whereas, were ye to be drawn aside to renounce it, our very heart would be wounded, and it would be bitter as death unto us. SECT. IV. 1 Thess. III. 8.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

9 *For what* sufficient *thanks can we* ever *render to God concerning you, for all the* flow of holy *joy with which we rejoice on your account*, for your conversion and progress in religion, when we have been presenting ourselves *before our God*, and breathing out our heart at his footstool;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

10 *Night and day* enlarging upon this, as a petition which lay nearest to our very souls, and, if I may be allowed such an expression, *superabundantly making it our request, to see your face, and to complete the deficiencies of your faith*, by instructing you in any article of religion, which, being so suddenly torn away from you, by the storm that was raised, we had not an opportunity of opening to you so clearly as your edification might have required.

11 Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

11 And we still continue to urge the humble supplication; *that God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, to whom the supreme government of the kingdom of providence is committed, *may*, by a secret but powerful interposition, so dispose and over-rule all things, as to *clear* and smooth *our way to you*, by removing those obstructions which at present remain;

12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you:

12 *And*, in the mean time, yea above all, *that the Lord* Jesus Christ, by the powerful operation of his Spirit on your hearts, *may cause you to be enlarged, and to abound in love toward each other, and to all* Christians, yea, towards the whole human race, *even as we* do indeed abound in affection *towards you*, and shall always rejoice in any opportunity of manifesting it, by whatever we may be able to do, or may be called to suffer for your sakes.

13 To the end he

13 May you feel this noble principle of universal goodness more and more active in your minds, *that*, by the experience of its efficacy, *your hearts may be strengthened* in every virtue,

[c] Indeed *live*.] It is well known, that in the sacred writings, *life* is often put for *happiness*, and Dr. Whitby has produced many instances of it in his note here.

SECT. IV. 1 Thess. III. 13. [*and you*] may at length [*be*) found *blameless in holiness before God even our Father, at the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints* around him, in that illustrious day, when their sanctity and glory shall be completed, and all their labours and sufferings in his cause abundantly recompensed.

may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

IMPROVEMENT.

NOT farther to insist on the tender affection of Paul to the Thessalonians, which has already afforded matter for so many profitable remarks, let us recollect that, as Christians, we also
Verse 3. are appointed to afflictions, by the experience of which our fitness for heaven, and our relish for our everlasting rest, are to be improved. It was faithful and kind in the apostles, after the
4 example of their great Master, to give us such admonitions; but let us not be moved by the apprehension of any sufferings that may await us, for he who hath undertaken to support and defend us, can make us more than conquerors; he can, even while we continue in this state of warfare, establish our hearts unblameable in holiness: and how blessed a connection will that have with our being presented faultless and blameless before the presence
13 of his glory, when Christ shall appear with all his saints, and when the sanctity of each shall be a glory to their common Master, as well as an everlasting blessing to every one of those spotless souls!

8 Let the ministers of the gospel nobly rise above all attachment to secular views, and make it their great business to advance in their hearers such a temper. Let it be their life, to see those Christian friends, whom God hath committed to their care, stand-
10 ing fast in the Lord. And, if they have reason to joy for their sakes before God, let them render their thanks to God for it, and night and day be urgent in their prayers for them, that whatever comfort they have may be continued, and that whatever is wanting in their faith and their love, may be perfected, by the Divine blessing on ministerial labours.

SECT. V.

The apostle addresses several practical exhortations to the Thessalonians suitable to their circumstances, and particularly recommends chastity, justice, charity, and prudence. 1 Thess. IV. 1—12.

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 1.

1 *S for what remains therefore,* my *brethren,* in subserviency to this important view, of

1 THESS. IV. 1. FURTHERMORE, then we beseech

SECT. V.

1 Thess. IV. 1.

you, brethren, and exhort *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

being thus presented with all the saints before the great tribunal, in the perfection of holiness and happiness, *we* now *beseech* you, *and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received* repeated instructions *from us*, while we were among you, *how you ought to walk*[a], if you desire to adorn your profession, *and to please* and honour *God*, who hath bestowed upon you the favour of being called into it, *so ye would abound more and more*, labouring continually to advance in every amiable quality, and every Christian grace.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

2 I will not largely insist on these things now, *for ye know what commandments we gave you*, in the name and *on the part of the Lord Jesus*, whose servants we all profess ourselves to be, and whose authority we ought always to account sacred.

3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

3 Bear them constantly in your mind, and often charge on your souls the observance of them, *for this is the will of God* concerning you, [*even*] *your sanctification;* that, as he hath chosen us from the rest of the world to be a people separate to his honour and service, we should not pollute ourselves with those abominations which are so common among the heathen, and particularly *that ye should abstain from fornication*, and all other kinds of lewdness so commonly practised among those who are ignorant of the true religion:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

4 Whereas it is now the declared pleasure of the great Former of our souls and bodies, *that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel*, this animal frame, in which this immortal soul is lodged, as a rich and invaluable jewel *in sanctification and honour;* using his body as an instrument of service to God, to whom it has been solemnly consecrated; not as if it were intended as an organ to debase the mind by sensuality,

[a] *How you ought to walk*, &c.] The French Testament renders the words thus, "We entreat and conjure you by the "Lord Jesus to follow our instructions "as to the manner in which you ought "to live, in order to pleasing God, and "that you would make continual pro-"gress in it." This is one specimen, among many, of the *paraphrastic* strain of this *version*, which changes the metaphorical expressions for phrases of a plainer nature equivalent to them; but, as the version I here give makes a part of a paraphrase, I thought it more convenient to keep nearer the original, though I have not made a point of giving what should be exactly a verbal translation. There is a medium between both, which I have at least attempted, and, if I have not hit upon it, I hope it is not for want of diligence and care.

SECT. V.

which would surely be the most dishonourable view in which it can be considered. Walk *not* therefore any longer *in the lust of concupiscence*, contriving to indulge yourselves in gross and lascivious gratifications, *even as the heathens* do, *who know not God*[b], and are therefore ignorant of that pure and sublime happiness which arises from contemplating, adoring, and imitating him.

1 Thes. IV. 5.

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 We have also told you, and we now repeat it, as an injunction of the greatest importance, that it is the will of God, *that no man should* in these, or any other matters, *over-reach, or defraud his brother in* [*any*] *affair*[c]. *For* though the fraud may be conducted in so artful a manner as to evade human conviction and punishment, yet it is most certain, that *the Lord* himself, the final and universal Judge, to whom we are all ere long to render up an account [*is*] *the avenger of all such, as we also told you before,* 7 *and testified* with all possible solemnity. *For God hath not called us*, in so extraordinary a manner, from the rest of the world, merely *to* a new name, or some different rites of external worship, while we are at liberty to indulge ourselves in *uncleanness*, as if we were patronized in the practice of it, merely by being numbered among Christians; *but*, as he is in himself perfectly holy, he hath called us *to* the love and practice of universal *holiness*, and would raise from among the degenerate children of men, a society, who, by the purity of their morals, should do an honour to the true religion, and approve themselves to be indeed the offspring of the Most High.

6 That no *man* go beyond and defraud his brother in *any* matter: because that the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 In all these things we have faithfully delivered unto you the charge and message which

8 He therefore

[b] *The heathens who know not God.*] Many have proved, by a variety of learned quotations, how much the politest nations among the ancients, and particularly the Greeks, were addicted to the most infamous kinds of *uncleanness*; and Dr. Whitby's note on this place may furnish out a catalogue, not to be read without a mixture of commiseration and horror.

[c] *Go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.*] Many interpret this of *lasciviously defiling their neighbour's bed*, taking the word πραγμα in an *ill* sense, as *Factum* is used in Latin. This, no doubt, is included, but I see no reason for limiting the clause to such a sense. *Clean hands* in the *Old Testament* signifies those unpolluted with *bribes*, and therefore no certain argument against the more extensive signification I have preferred, can be drawn from the next clause.

that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.

we received upon the highest authority: *he therefore who despiseth* our testimony and admonitions, *despiseth not man* alone, *but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit*, and caused it to dwell within us, and to guide us in our discourses and writings, into the certain and infallible knowledge of his will.[d]

SECT. V.

1 Thess. VI. 8.

9 But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

I have been large on some of the preceding articles, knowing how much you were addicted in your heathen state, to some of the vices I have exhorted you to avoid. *But concerning brotherly love*, or that peculiar charity and affection which one Christian owes to another, *ye need not that I should* largely *write to you* now, *for ye yourselves are divinely taught to love one another*. God dwelling in our nature, hath given you the example and the precept, with all possible advantage, and his holy Spirit descending on your hearts, forms and fashions them to this great law of love. *And indeed I* must do you the justice to say, by what I can learn of you, that *ye* actually *do it to all the* Christian *brethren which are in all Macedonia*, whether at Philippi, Apollonia, Amphipolis, Berœa, or elsewhere. *But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound* in this benevolent and amiable disposition yet *more and more*, not only to those that are your own countrymen, but to all the children of our heavenly Father, however they may be dispersed in one part or another. *And*, while many indulge to an enterprising temper, and are always undertaking some new design, to make themselves talked of, and to draw the eyes and observation of the world upon them, we advise you, *that you make it your ambition to live quietly* in the practice of those peaceful and humble virtues which suit the genius of Christianity, *and* particularly that you *do your proper business*.[e] *And*, as Providence

9

10 And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

10

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work

11

[d] *He therefore who despiseth*, &c.] I will not here argue at large, how strongly this verse speaks the *inspiration of Paul* in what he wrote, and consequently that of the sacred writers in general; but I wish what I have said on this subject, in the Essay on the inspiration of the New Testament, subjoined to the third volume of this work, may be seriously considered, and that the important truth established in it, may be perpetually borne in mind by all my readers.

[e] *Do your proper business.*] This exhortation was peculiarly proper to the Thessalonians, as there seems to have been a meddling pragmatical temper prevailing

SECT. V.

hath placed most of you in such low circumstances of life, that you are obliged to maintain yourselves by your daily labour, we hope you will go on diligently and cheerfully to *work with your own hands* for that purpose, that you may not as idle drones become the burden of society, but rather may be able to do something for the support of your poorer brethren, *as* ye know *we gave it you in charge*, during the little time we resided amongst you. Attend to it therefore, *that so ye may walk decently towards those that are without* the inclosure of the church, and silence the clamours which the enemies of the gospel would be glad to raise against it, as making men idle and irregular; *and* [*that*] *you may have need of nothing*, but without being under a necessity of asking relief from them or any others, may be preserved from such degrees of extreme poverty as might expose you to their contempt, and into which frugal and industrious persons seldom fall, without some extraordinary providence, which audibly and effectually bespeaks the compassion of their neighbours.

1 Thess. IV. 11. with your own hands, (as we commanded you;)

12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO would not wish to be instructed in every thing which might conduce to our walking so as to please God? who would not delight in frequent exhortations, to abound in such a conduct more and more, that every day may improve upon the last, till we *perfect holiness in his fear*? Blessed be God, the rules are plain, and our own conscience must bear witness to the reasonableness and goodness of them. *This is the will of God, even our sanctification*; that we should be honoured with his amiable image, and, by sharing something of his moral character, may share something of that happiness which in the perfection of holiness he enjoys. He hath indeed given us a compounded nature, and hath appointed us for a time to struggle with its animal powers, that by a victory over them we may approve our duty and obedience, and be fitted for a purer happiness above, than this low state of being will admit. Let Christians therefore learn to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour,

Ver. 1. 2 3 4

among some of them, 2 Thes. iii. 11, which tended much to the reproach of their profession.—As to the emphasis of the word περισσευειν, compare 2 Cor. v. 9, and the note.

and not be captives to the mean lusts of concupiscence and uncleanness, as the heathens, who, not having the knowledge of God, were more excusable than we in those indulgences for which the knowledge of themselves and of their own nature would nevertheless, in some degree, condemn them. SECT. V. Ver. 5

Let us, as we dread the displeasure and vengeance of God, the supreme Guardian of the rights of his creatures, take heed that we do not allow ourselves, when it is most in our power, *to go beyond, or defraud our brethren in any matter*, but endeavour to 6 shew, that we have indeed been *taught of God to love one another*, 9 and that we have received into our very hearts that maxim which our gracious Redeemer has given us, That we should *do unto others as we would they should do unto us*. On this principle likewise, let us diligently employ ourselves in our own proper affairs, that, instead of being the burdens of society, we may in our respective spheres be its support; and, quietly attending to 11 what lies within our own province, let us leave ambitious schemes and projects to others, thinking ourselves happy enough, if we may be approved by him who hath allotted to the inhabitants of earth their several parts, and will another day accept and reward them, not according to the distinction and elevation of their stations, but according to the integrity with which they have behaved themselves in them. So shall we secure a testimony even in the consciences of those that are without, who would perhaps 12 ungenerously and unrighteously rejoice in an occasion of charging upon the gospel of Christ, the follies and irregularities of its professors.

They will never be able to charge any thing on the gospel itself, if they take their ideas of it from the writings of these its authentic teachers. And let it be remembered, that they gave such abundant evidence of the authority with which they taught, 8 that *he who despiseth them despiseth not man, but God*, from whom they derived the spirit by which they preached and wrote. His voice let us hear with reverence, his dictates let us humbly obey.

The hour is near in which he will assert the honour of his word, and demonstrate to all the world the wisdom of submitting to its dictates.

SECT. VI.

The apostle particularly sets himself to comfort his Christian friends with relation to those that were fallen asleep in Jesus, by an animating view of that glory and happiness on which, at the general resurrection, they should enter in their complete persons. 1 Thess. IV. 13,—*to the end.*

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 13.

SECT. VI.

1 Thess. IV. 13.

I HEAR it with concern, that, since I have been separated from you, it hath pleased God to remove some dear and valuable members of your society, and I wonder not that you are tenderly affected with such a stroke. *But I would not have you ignorant,*[a] my dear *brethren, concerning* the true state of *them that are* thus *fallen asleep* in the faith of Jesus, *that ye may not lament* with such unbounded transports and excessive forms of mourning, *as* are practised by *others*, even by your heathen neighbours, *who* are ignorant of God, and *have no* well-grounded *hope*[b] of an happy immortality, like that
14 which in the gospel is imparted to you. *For* surely, *if we* do indeed *believe* those great and important doctrines which that divine dispensation teaches us, *that Jesus*, the Son of God, *died* to expiate our sins, *and* that he *rose again*

1 THESS. IV. 13.

BUT I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even

[a] *I would not have you ignorant,* &c.] Mons. Saurin, in his long and learned criticism on this text, which he thinks one of the hardest in the New Testament, (Saur. Ser. Vol. VI. No. 1,) gives it as his opinion, that the desire which prevailed in Christians to see Christ, when he should appear to judgment, made them lament those of their brethren who died as cut off from that hope. In reference to which, he assures them, that they should be in that respect entirely on a level with those of their brethren who should *then be found alive.* But it may be queried, even on this hypothesis, why he does not directly tell them, that there was no particular room for such lamentations on this account, as they themselves, and many succeeding generations were to die before the *coming of our Lord.* He acknowledges that the apostle did not urge that, because he did not then exactly know whether Christ's appearance would be in *that* age, or at some much more remote distance of time. And this ignorance was certainly consistent with the knowledge of all that was necessary to the preaching of the gospel. Compare Mark xiii. 32.

[b] *As others who have no hope.*] Tully says, (Tusc. Disp. i. 13.) "Who would "lament the death of a friend, unless he "supposed him deprived of all the enjoyments of life, and sensible of the "loss of them!" How forcible a remark in the present connection! I see no reason at all to imagine, as some have done, that there is a reference to the *notion* of some *Jewish zealots*, that uncircumcised persons had no part in the *resurrection.* The apostle's argument is by no means levelled at such an apprehension, nor do I find any evidence that the church at Thessalonica was yet pestered with such corrupters of Christianity.

so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

from the dead, that he might secure our final salvation, we may easily believe, that a scheme thus undertaken and prosecuted, shall not fail of its effect; but that, *in like manner also, God shall*, by the exertion of that mighty power with which he hath clothed his triumphant Saviour, *bring with him*, in the train of his magnificent retinue, at his final appearance, all *those* of his faithful servants *who sleep in Jesus.*[c] As they died under the direction of his providence, and committing themselves to his care, it shall in due time appear, that they are not lost, though they may have waited long for the consummation of their glory. *For this we* now *say to you,* 15

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,

by the express *word of the Lord,*[d] on the authority of an immediate revelation from Christ himself, and not merely on our own conjecture, or wish, *that we*, that is, those of us Christians *who remain alive*[e] *at the coming of the Lord* to

SECT. VI.

1 Thess. IV. 14.

[c] *Who sleep in Jesus.*] The words διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, which we connect with κοιμηθέντας, and render *sleep in Jesus*, may be considered as making a separate clause, and may imply, that it is by the *power* and agency *of Christ* that God will bring with him those of his people that are departed out of this life. The phrase to express *sleeping in Christ*, is κοιμηθέντες ἐν Χριστῷ; compare ver. 16: 1 Cor. xv. 18. Archbishop Tillotson explains the expression here used, as appropriate to the *martyrs*, and renders διὰ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, *for Jesus' sake*; but it cannot be proved that the grief to which the apostle refers, related only to such, and the force of the argument plainly reaches farther. Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 184.

[d] *By the word of the Lord.*] I think no words can more plainly assert that, in what follows, he speaks by an *express revelation from Christ*, and consequently there can be no room for any interpretation that can suppose him at all mistaken in any circumstance of the ensuing account.

[e] *We*, that is, those of us *who remain alive.*] This hath been interpreted by many, as an intimation, that the apostle expected to be found *alive at the day of judgment*; and on that interpretation, some have urged it as an instance of his entertaining, at least for a while, *mistaken* notions on that head, as if the *day of the Lord* were nearly approaching. But this is directly contrary to his own explication of the matter, 2 Thess. ii. 1, &c. as well as to other passages in which he expresses his expectation of death. Compare Phil. i. 20; and 1 Cor. vi. 14; 2 Cor. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 6. Others have pleaded this passage in favour of that doctrine which teaches the *resurrection* of some *most eminent saints*, before the main body of believers, and this, as most of the patrons of this scheme hath explained it, in order to share with Christ in the glories and felicities of his personal reign upon earth. But to me it seems most natural to suppose that Paul here speaks as one of the Christian body, though he was not one of that particular number concerning whom he directly asserts what is here said. Thus Hosea says, (Hos. xii. 4.) *God spake with us in Bethel*; and the Psalmist, lxvi. 6, *we rejoiced*, that is, at the Red-sea when divided, and lxxxi. 5, *I heard a language I understood not*, that is, in Egypt, though neither were in existence at the times when the facts referred to happened. It is very unjust in Orobio to represent this as an artifice of the apostle to invite people to Christianity, by the expectation of being taken up alive to heaven in a very little time. Lim. Col. p. 75. His explication of this matter, in the next epistle is abundantly sufficient to absolve him of all such suspicions, and indeed the sincerity that appeared in

SECT. VI.

1 Thess. IV. 16.

judgment, *shall not* so *prevent those who are asleep*, as to be glorified before them. *For the Lord himself*, our great and blessed Redeemer, arrayed in all his own glory, and that of his Father, *shall* in that great day, *descend from heaven, with a* triumphant *shout*, raised by millions of happy attendant spirits. His appearance shall be proclaimed *with the voice of the* great *archangel*,[f] *even with the trumpet of God*, which shall then sound louder than it did on mount Sinai when the law was given. *And the dead in Christ shall* all in a moment be awakened by it, and shall *rise* out of their graves in the *first* place,[g] springing forth in forms of glory, to the infinite astonishment of the surviving world.

17 And *afterwards we*, that is, those of us, *who are left alive* at the time when this most awful and important day opens, *shall together with them*, by a mighty and instantaneous operation of the Divine power, *be snatched up into the clouds*,[h] *in order to* our *meeting the Lord in the* region of the *air*, where his throne shall then be erected; and we, having been openly acknowledged and acquitted by him, shall be assessors with him in that judgment to which wicked men and angels are there to be brought forth; and, when the final sentence is passed upon them, shall return to heaven, with our re-ascending Saviour, *and so shall we be with the Lord for ever*, and all share a blissful eternity in

18 the sight and participation of his glory. *There-*

shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore,

his whole conduct, evidently shews him to have been incapable of any such design. Compare Lamothe of Insp. 133—141.

[f] *With the voice of the archangel.*] I cannot think, with Mr. Pierce, that the *archangel* is *Christ himself*, so called as the great *ruler of angels*. There seems an evident impropriety in thus varying the expression, if it be only intended to say, that Christ shall shout as he descends; nor are the scriptures, to which this learned writer refers, (viz. 1 Sam. iii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.) by any means parallel examples. See Pierce on Phil. ii. 9.

[g] *The dead in Christ shall rise first.*] It has generally been inferred from hence, that good men shall rise before the wicked, and 1 Cor. xv. 23, seems to favour it. But this text only asserts their rising, before the saints who are found alive shall be changed.

[h] *Caught up.*] Not, says Dr. John Scott, by the *ministry of angels*, (Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 1204.) but by the vigorous activity of our glorified body, which Mr. Piggot, (Serm. ii. p. 67.) supposes shall be refined to such a degree of spirituality as to be able to *tread air*; and Mr. Whiston has a notion analogous to it. (App. to Boyle's Lect.) I pretend not to determine on the nicety of questions like these. Only I cannot think the expression of being *caught*, or *snatched up*, suits the exertion of what shall then be a *natural* power; nor can I suppose that we shall have any thing to do with *air* in the state which is to succeed the great day, in which *the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved*, 2 Pet. iii. 12.

comfort one another with these words.

fore when your hearts are distressed with grief, for the loss of your pious friends, or on any other occasion which can arise in this mortal life, *comfort* yourselves and *one another with these words*; the tenor of which is so important, and the truth contained in them so certain, as being taught by the infallible dictates of the Spirit of God, and revealed to us by him, from whose fidelity, power, and grace, we expect this complete salvation[1].

sect. VI.

1 Thess. IV. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

O! who can be sufficiently thankful for the strong consolations which these Divine words administer! How many drooping hearts have been cheered by them in every age, while successively mourning over the pious dead! How often have we ourselves been driven to them, as to a sacred anchor, when our hearts have been overwhelmed within us, and if God continue us a few years longer, what repeated occasions may arise of flying to them again! Let us charge it upon our hearts that we do honour to our holy profession in every circumstance, and particularly in our sorrows as well as our joys. When Providence is pleased to make such breaches upon us, let us not *sorrow as those who have no hope* for our deceased friends, or for ourselves. Surely we cannot doubt the very first and most fundamental articles of our faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God; and if we do indeed assuredly believe these, what a blessed train of consequences will they draw after them! and this consequence most apparently, that *they who sleep in Jesus* shall not finally perish, but *shall be brought with him* to grace his triumph.

Ver. 13.

14

And O what a triumph shall that be! Let us now anticipate the joy with which, if true believers, we shall then lift up our heads, and see our complete salvation drawing nigh. What though we die and moulder in the grave? the saints then alive shall not prevent us: though the last memorial of our names may long have perished from the earth, it shall appear that they are written in heaven. And when the *Lord himself descends from heaven* with that earth-rending *shout*, when the *trump of God shall sound, his dead shall live*, like his dead body shall they re-

15

16

[1] As being taught, &c.] The MSS. of New College in Oxford, and the Barbarine Library (No. 1 of each), add to λογοις τουτοις the words τω πνευματος, *comfort one another with these words of the Spirit.* And though I see no reason to believe that addition *authentic*, yet, as the sense is just and right, I have expressed it in the paraphrase, as I often do in such cases; that if peradventure any thing that belonged to the original has been omitted in the received copies (which I hardly suspect,) the reader may one way or another meet with it.

SECT. VI. vive; *they that dwell in the dust shall arise and sing, for his dew is as that falling upon herbs, and the earth shall cast forth its dead,* (Isa. xxvi. 19.)

But who can now conceive the rapture with which so many millions shall start up at once from their beds of dust, all arrayed in robes of glory, and, spurning the earth in which they have been so long entombed, and all that is mortal and corruptible, shall soar aloft in one joyful company *with those who shall then be found alive, to meet the Lord in the air,* forming a mighty host, *bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and awful as an army with banners* (Cant. vi. 10); they shall soar to meet their Lord, attracted by Divine love, and borne on in their flight by an almighty power. We shall ascend to him, we shall be owned by him, we shall be seated near him; *for Christ who is our life shall appear,* therefore shall we *appear with him in glory;* (Col. iii. 4.)

Ver. 16. 17

Nor shall it be merely the triumph of one day, or of any limited period, how long soever. It is the promise of his faithfulness and of his love, that so we shall ever be with the Lord. It is a glory that never shall decay, a meeting secure from all danger, from all possibility of future separation. In what circumstance of affliction shall not these consolations be felt? What torrent of tears shall they not be able to stop? What groans of distressed nature shall they not be sufficient to turn into songs of joy? Thanks, everlasting, ever new, ever growing thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, in the views of such a felicity! And let the whole choir of saints, the living and the dead, unite in one joyful *Amen.*

17 18

SECT. VII.

The apostle strenuously exhorts the Thessalonians to a diligent preparation for that important day of Christ's appearance, of which he had been discoursing above. 1 Thess. V. 1—11.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 1.

SECT. VII. I HAVE told you that the solemn day of universal judgment will certainly come, and have been endeavouring to lead your minds to those views of it which must be most reviving to every true believer: *but concerning the particular times and seasons* of this grand event, with which the œconomy of providence in this world is to close, and some very wonderful occurrences which are to precede it, I am satisfied, my *brethren, ye have no need of my writing to you* accurately and largely. *For ye*

1 Thess. V. 1.

BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves

SECT. VII.

1 Thess. V. 2.

know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief *in* the night:

yourselves do already *assuredly know*, as wherever we come, we make it one of our first doctrines, *that the* great *day of the Lord*, to which our eyes and hearts are so much directed, *comes just like a thief*[a] *in the night*, and will surprise the inhabitants of the world in general by a dreadful alarm, when they are sleeping in the deepest security.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

For when they shall be most ready to *say*, All things about us are in perfect *peace and safety*, and no evil of any kind threatens us, *then sudden destruction shall come upon them*, and seize them as inevitably and painfully *as travail* comes *upon a woman with child*, whose days are accomplished, *and they shall not* be able by any means to *escape* it.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

But I am persuaded, that *you*, my *brethren*, *are not* sleeping *in darkness;* but *that*, as you have the light of the gospel shining around you, it is your desire to act so agreeably to its dictates and to maintain such a sense of the great and important prospect it opens upon you, as to have no reason to apprehend, but that *the day* of which I speak, or the day of death, which shall consign you to its unalterable doom, *should come upon you as a thief*, or surprise you in an unprepared state.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

For *ye are all*, by profession, *the children of the light, and the children of the day*, as ye call yourselves Christians, and I trust are so, not in name only, but in truth. Since *we are not of the night, nor of darkness*, if we really answer our profession, by which we are so indispensably obliged, to endeavour to resemble the Divine Being in holiness, and to maintain a temper and conduct which should not fear examination and discovery:

6 Therefore let us not sleep as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.

Since this *therefore* is the case, *let us* answer the engagement, and *not sleep as the rest* of mankind [*do;*] *but let us watch and be sober*, that we may not be obnoxious to any unreasonable and unwelcome surprise.

7 For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that

For they who sleep, generally choose to *sleep in the night, and they who are drunken*, if they have not quite

[a] *Cometh like a thief.*] Mr. Blackwall justly observes the remarkable emphasis of this passage. *A thief* comes upon people when they are bound in sleep, and they awake in amazement and confusion, being found unarmed and in an helpless posture; *pangs* come upon a woman, when perhaps she is eating, drinking, or laughing, and thinks of nothing less than that hour. And here it is said, not that the day of the Lord *will come* thus, but that *it is actually coming*, which increases the awfulness of the representation. Blackwall's Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 209.

SECT. VII.

outgrown all common sense of decency, *are drunken in the night;* whereas the day is the season of wakefulness, sobriety, and labour. Let us not therefore, by our negligent and dissolute behaviour, seem, as it were, to turn the day into night. *But let us*, Christians, *who*, as I said before, *are* the children *of the day*, *be sober*, and keep on our guard against our spiritual enemies, *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*, which will defend us against their mortal attacks; *and* [*for*] *an helmet*, *the* lively *hope of* that eternal *salvation* which God hath promised, and which, if rightly understood, may be abundantly sufficient to bear us through all the dangers which may lie in our way to it.

1 Thess. V. 8.

be drunken, are drunken in the night.

8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 And, blessed be God, there is room for arming ourselves with such an hope, *for God hath not*, as he justly might have done, *destined us to* bear for ever the final consequence of his *wrath*, to which our disobedience to him had rendered us obnoxious; *but* he hath been pleased to appoint us *to the obtaining of* that great *salvation* set before us in the gospel *by our Lord Jesus Christ*, who hath procured it for all true believers, and will assuredly at length bestow it upon them. Be therefore continually mindful of that compassionate Redeemer, *who* not only subjected himself to the many burdens and inconveniencies of mortal life for our sakes, but even *died* in all the ignominy and agony of the cross *for us*, *that whether we wake or sleep*, *we should live together with him*;[b] that while we live, or when we die, the life and happiness of our immortal souls should be secure, in an union to him which death itself shall never be able to dissolve. *Therefore comfort* yourselves and *one another* with the thoughts of this great salvation, *and edify each* to those continued improve-

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

10 Who died for us; that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify

[b] *Whether we wake or sleep*, &c.] Some interpret this still more literally than I have done, as if he had said, "Whether "Christ comes in the night, when we "are sleeping on our beds, or in the day, "when we are awake, and busy in the "pursuit of our common affairs." But, as *sleeping* had just before been put for *death*, it seems more natural to interpret this clause, as speaking of the state of *believers*, whether *alive* or *dead*. And then I think it must contain a direct proof of the *life of the soul*, while the body is sleeping in the grave. God forbid, that any should understand these words, as intimating that Christ's death is intended to secure our salvation, whether we take any watchful care of it or not. Yet, alas, the generality of Christians live as if that were the genuine and only interpretation!

one another, even as also ye do.

ments in the life of holiness, which may correspond to so glorious a hope. This is most apparently your duty, and, *as* I know many good and valuable things of you, I am *also* persuaded that *you do* indeed make conscience of it. SECT. VII.

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE we continually see so many around us suddenly surprised into the eternal world, and fixed in that state in which judgment will find them, let us be very careful, that the *day of the Lord may not overtake us as a thief*, but that we maintain a continual *watch*. How many are at this hour speaking peace and safety to themselves, over whose heads instantaneous destruction is hovering, such a destruction that they shall never be able to escape, never able to recover from it! Ver. 2. 4 3

Let us endeavour to awaken ourselves and each other. Are we not indeed all children of the day? Let us rouse ourselves, and use the light, that by it we may dispatch our labours, and, favoured by it, be guarded against the most sudden attacks of our spiritual enemies. Let us be *sober and vigilant, lest our adversary the devil* break in upon us by a surprise, which the unexpected weapons by which he attacks us may render yet more dangerous. 5 6

Our own armour is described and provided, if we seek it from the magazine of God. Let faith and love ever defend our breast. Let the hope of salvation cover our head. Let us adore the Divine clemency and mercy, that we are not appointed unto wrath, but enjoy the views of such a salvation, to be obtained by Jesus Christ. As he hath done his part to procure it for us, having died for this important purpose, let us exert ourselves to the utmost in our proper sphere for securing it, that we may lay hold on eternal life. Then may we be happily indifferent to life or death: while we continue in the body, when that is sleeping in the grave, and our souls remain in the invisible world; and when our sleeping dust shall be roused, and both soul and body live in unremitting vigour and energy, beyond the need of that repose which is now so necessary,—still in each of these different states we shall live with him; and he will make the progression of the soul from one state of being to another, its progression to stages of increasing holiness and joy. In the persuasion of this, let us comfort, exhort, and edify each other, and we shall feel the energy of the exhortations we give, and the sweetness of the consolations we administer. 8 9 10 11

SECT. VIII.

The apostle concludes his epistle with a variety of short practical exhortations and advices. 1 Thess. V. 12—*to the end.*

1 THESSALONIANS V. 12.

SECT. VIII. 1 Thess. V. 12.

I HAVE exhorted you to endeavour to comfort and edify one another, *but* I would not by this be understood as intimating, either that the proper work of your ministers is to be taken out of their hands, or that any slight is to be put upon them in the execution of it. On the contrary, *we beseech you, brethren, to know*, to reverence, and respect *those that labour among you* in that important office, *and preside over you in* the name of *the Lord;*[a] whose business it is publicly to instruct you, *and* personally to *admonish you*, as occasion shall require. It is in love to his church, that Christ hath appointed such officers, and you will find the benefit of their assistance in the whole of your Christian course. I would therefore advise *and* charge you to *esteem them exceedingly in love, on the account of their work*, in which they are the representatives of him who is the great Shepherd of the sheep. [*And*] for their sakes as well as your own, let me farther press you to *be at peace with one another*, and to guard against the first risings of any thing which might alienate your affections; as it is impossible for you to conceive how much mischief might spring up in the society, from causes of this kind, which may seem in their beginnings too inconsiderable to be regarded. *And we* also *exhort you, brethren*, that you would all in a proper manner

1 THESS. V. 12.

AND we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now, we exhort you, brethren,

[a] *Preside over you*, &c.] Προϊσταμενους may signify those who *preside over your assemblies and moderate in them.* There were certainly many persons endowed with miraculous gifts in this church, and there might have been danger of great irregularities, such as prevailed in the church at Corinth, (chap. v. 19—21,) if some had not been appointed to preside over the rest during the time of public exercises. Such officers there also were in the Jewish synagogues, as is well known. Compare 1 Tim. v. 17. See Bar. Misc. Vol. I. p. 81—84, and the note on Heb xiii. 17. But it is evident that ministers, by virtue of their general office, may be said to preside over Christian assemblies, even though there were no such peculiar need of their interposition, to moderate or direct the exercise of their gifts who were officiating in public.

warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

concur with your pious ministers, overseers, and elders, in all proper acts of Christian discipline; and likewise, that ye endeavour by private addresses, as Providence gives you an opportunity, to promote the interests of true religion in the hearts of each other. And in this view, *admonish them that are disorderly*,[b] and unruly, neglecting, and proudly refusing to keep the rank which God hath assigned them; *comfort the feeble minded*, whose courage and resolution is ready to fail them, under the many difficulties with which in present circumstances you are surrounded; *succour the weak* and infirm, whether in body or mind, and *be long-suffering toward all*, not ready to drive the justest censure to an excess, till every softer and more gentle method has been tried. And whatever injury any of you may have received, whether from professed friends, or from avowed enemies, *see that no one render to any evil for evil, but always pursue that which is good*; endeavouring to the utmost to promote the happiness of all about you. Maintain this temper *both towards each other*, that is, towards all your fellow-Christians, *and towards all men*, not excepting your enemies and persecutors; sure by this means either to mollify their hearts, or at least to approve your own conduct in the sight of God, and to make whatever evil you suffer, the occasion of obtaining from him blessings which will infinitely counterbalance it. And, in expectation of this, *be always rejoicing*,[c] in the midst of your trials and afflictions, knowing that your complete redemption is approaching, and that in the mean time you have always the presence of your God and your Saviour, from which you may derive unutterable satisfaction and delight, sufficient to support you under all your sufferings. And, in order to maintain and improve this holy joy, *pray incessantly*.[d] Be con-

SECT. VIII.

1 Thess. v. 14.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

15

16 Rejoice evermore.

16

17 Pray without ceasing.

17

[b] *Are disorderly.*] So ἀτακτοῦσι is properly rendered. It is well known to be a *military* term, expressing the character of *soldiers* who keep not their *ranks*, and will not know their *colours*.

[c] *Be always rejoicing.*] The words πάντοτε χαίρετε may express the form of a salutation, as if he had said, *may you always be prosperous and happy*; but as they are put among so many other short exhortations, I think this version much preferable.

[d] *Pray incessantly.*] That is, *at all proper seasons*. So the burnt offering pre-

SECT. VIII.

stant in your stated devotions at their returning seasons, and endeavour to keep your minds habitually prepared for those pious ejaculations, which have so happy a tendency to promote the Christian temper, or for any sudden call you may have to address yourselves more solemnly

1 Thess. v. 17.

18 to the Divine Majesty. And, whatever your circumstances may be, remember not only your dependence on God, but your obligation to him, and *in every thing give thanks;* since it is certain, you can never be encompassed with such afflictions as not to have much greater cause of thankfulness than complaint. And this cheerful grateful spirit you should be concerned to maintain, *for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, with regard to you* Christians; as by giving you his Son, and with him all the invaluable blessings of his covenant, he has laid a foundation for perpetual thankfulness, that may justly support the demand.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Moreover, that this temper may be preserved in your minds, take heed that ye *quench not the* sacred flame of the *Holy Spirit*[e] in any of his influences, as you know it is his great office to excite and maintain every pious and devout affection in the soul. Especially be careful that ye do not damp it, by indulging in any degree to a sensual or malevolent disposition, which must so naturally provoke him to withdraw both

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 his gifts and his graces. And, as a regular attendance on Divine ordinances will greatly tend to cherish his influences, and a neglect of public worship proportionably obstruct them, *despise not* the holy exercises of *prophesyings*,[f] in which the ministers of Christ interpret scripture by a singular inspiration, or speak to men

20 Despise not prophesyings.

sented every morning and evening, is called *perpetual*. Lev. vi. 20. Compare Luke xxiv. 53, with Acts ii. 46, 47. See also John xviii. 20.

[e] *Quench not the Spirit.*] This has generally been expounded as referring to the *gifts of the Spirit*, the exercise of which in themselves or others should not be hindered. Compare 1 Tim. iv. 14, 1 Cor. xiv. 39. The phrase here used, according to some, particularly Lord Barrington, (Miscell. Sacr. Vol. I. p. 140.) has a reference to the descent of the Spirit as in *flames of fire*, as he supposes there may also be in the word αναζωπυρειν, 2 Tim. i. 6. See the note there.

[f] *Despise not prophesyings.*] This caution, as explained in the paraphrase, may perhaps intimate, that the neglect of a due regard to *prophesyings*, which some were too ready to despise, might be a means of blasting even those more splendid gifts which they might be tempted to prefer to them.

SECT. VIII.

1 Thess. V. 21.

by way of exhortation or comfort; but listen to them with reverence, and own the authority of God as speaking in his appointed messengers. Yet be upon your guard that ye are not imposed upon in an affair of so much importance, and take not every forward assertion for an oracle from God; but *try all things* with attention, examine the validity of the pretensions which are made to extraordinary inspiration, and when you have discussed them with impartiality and diligence, then resolutely *hold fast that which is good*, and be not prevailed upon to deny, or reject it on any considerations.

21 Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Remember also, that, in order to preserve your innocence, it will be necessary to guard against circumstances of strong temptation, and things concerning the lawfulness of which you may have just suspicion, though you cannot absolutely pronounce them to be criminal. I exhort you therefore, as you value your safety, to *abstain from all* that has so much as the *appearance of evil*, and from whatever may be likely to prove the occasion of sin. 22

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and *I pray God* your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of

And while I thus urge you to proper diligence and caution on your part, I join to my counsels my most ardent and affectionate prayers for you. *May the God of peace himself*, that God who hath now reconciled us, and is become the source of all prosperity and happiness, *sanctify you entirely*, in all the parts of your nature; *and* [*I pray God that*] *your whole constitution*, or frame, your rational *spirit*, your animal *soul*, *and* your *body*[s] animated by it, *may be* so *kept blameless* by Divine grace now, as *to* be presented with the greatest honour and acceptance at *the appearance* 23

[s] *Your whole constitution*, &c.] I wish I had known better how to render ὁλοκληρον ὑμων, which being followed by τὸ πνευμα, ἡ ψυχη, &c. ought not, as in our version, to be rendered as an *adjective* to the first. It signifies the *whole frame* of nature allotted to you. It is very evident, that the apostle, in the following words, refers to a notion which, as the learned Vitringa has very accurately shewn, (Vitr. Obs. lib. iii. cap. 4.) prevailed among the rabbies as well as the philosophers, that the *person* of a man was constituted of *three distinct substances*, the *rational spirit*, the *animal soul*, and the visible *body*. He seems to suppose, from Heb. iv. 12, the two former may be separated; and some have thought that he intimates, 1 Cor. xiv. 14, 15, that *one* may know what the *other* does not. This is not a place to state or examine this notion at large; it certainly derives great weight from this text. My curious readers may consult, besides the commentators, Hallet on Script. Vol. I. p. 39, &c.

SECT. VIII.

of our Lord Jesus Christ, whensoever it shall be. This I desire it, and cheerfully hope it, for *faithful* [*is*] *he who hath called you* to the Christian faith, *who also will do* this; since [*it*] is what he hath graciously promised to all true believers, whom he hath committed to the care of Christ, as their Shepherd, who will give them eternal life, and will raise them up in the last day.

1 Thess. v. 24

our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.

25 This is the glorious gospel we preach, and, that we may be successful in preaching it, I entreat you, *brethren*, to *pray for us*; for we greatly need and greatly value the prayers of our fellow Christians. And when ye assemble together, in token of your mutual affection, and agreeably to the custom which hath long prevailed, *salute all the brethren* present *with an holy kiss*; and let the sisters in like manner salute each other, taking care to conduct this action with the strictest modesty and propriety.

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.

27 As I write these things, not merely for the perusal of this or that particular friend into whose hands they may first fall, but for general use, and, as the importance of them is very great, *I adjure you, by the* authority of our *Lord* Jesus Christ, committed to me, *that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren* of your church, at some time when you are all gathered together for Divine worship. And, that you may be sure it is genuine, I add with my own hand my general benediction, *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] always *with you*, to support that principle of true Christianity which he hath implanted in your souls, till the purposes of his love be completed in your everlasting salvation. *Amen.*

27 I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a variety of excellent instructions does this short section contain! yea, how much is expressed in some of its shortest sentences! But how hard is it for our degenerate hearts to learn these lessons which so few words are sufficient to express! This habitual joy in God, this constant disposition to prayer, this thankful temper, that upon every call may overflow in thanksgiving, this abstinence from every appearance of evil. "Blessed Lord! we need a better spirit than our own to teach us these things. May thy grace be with us, and may none of us quench

Ver. 16. 17. 18. 22.

" the Spirit, nor despise those ordinances which by his heaven- SECT.
" ly communications he so often owns!" Let us endeavour by VIII.
the daily importunity of prayer, to engage more of his effica- Ver. 19,
cious and purifying influences, to sanctify the whole frame of our 20
nature, our spirits, our souls and our bodies; that we may so
understand and choose, so love and delight in Divine things,
and maintain so regular and constant a command over our appe-
tites of flesh and blood, and all the irregular propensities of ani-
mal nature, that we may be continually fit for the appearance
of Christ, and be more like what we hope we shall be, when
presented before the presence of his glory.

To promote this, let us watch over one another in the Lord. 14
Let Christian societies preserve a regular discipline, with a due
mixture of zeal and tenderness. Let the friendship of private
persons be rendered mutually subservient to religious improve-
ment, and let a due regard be ever paid to those who labour
among them, and preside over them in the Lord. They will 12
not require a blind submission to their dictates, if they rightly
understand the gospel they are to teach. They will allow, they
will encourage, they will urge their hearers to prove all things,
which even the apostles themselves, with all their plenitude of 21
inspiration, did not think it beneath them to do. But they who
thus candidly enquire, and are determined to hold fast what is
truly good, knowing how excellent an office the ministry is,
knowing how much the edification of the church depends upon
it, will esteem those that bear it very highly in love, for their
works sake, and in whatever instances they may be constrained,
by what they judge to be the evidence of truth, to differ from
their brethren, or even from their teachers, will be solicitous to
maintain harmony and love in the societies to which they belong,
as it becomes them to do who are the disciples of that wisdom
from above, which hath taught them inseparably to connect 13
their regards to purity and peace.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST EPISTLE
TO THE THESSALONIANS.

B

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

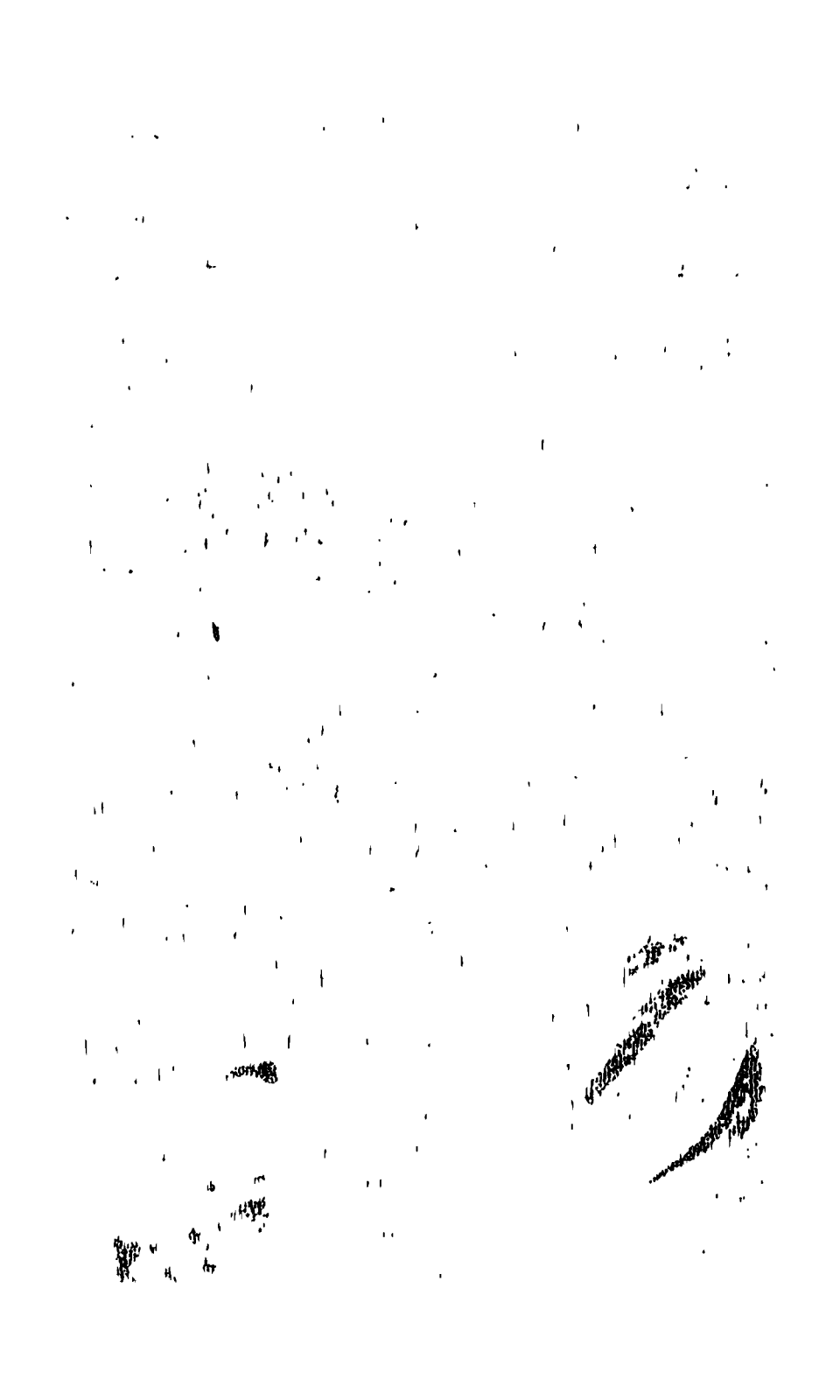
SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

THESSALONIANS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

IT has been already observed, that the first epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Corinth, about the year of our Lord 52; and as Timothy and Silas appear, from the inscription of this second epistle, to have been still with the apostle, it has generally been concluded, that he wrote it while he continued in the same city, and not long after the former.—(See Vol. III. § 41, note *i*.)

The general design of it is to confirm the Thessalonians in their Christian profession, and to comfort them under the sufferings to which they were exposed. Besides which, the apostle sets himself to rectify some mistaken apprehensions they seem to have entertained about the coming of Christ; and to direct them in the exercise of Christian discipline, towards some irregular members of the society.

This epistle, (which, like the former, bears St. Paul's name, with those of Timothy and Silas, in the inscription,) begins with a devout acknowledgment to God for the eminent attainments which the Thessalonians had made in religion, and particularly for the zeal and fidelity with which they adhered to the Christian cause in the midst of persecution. To support and animate them

under their trials, the apostle reminds them of the distinguished honour that would be conferred on all the saints at the coming of Christ, and the vengeance that would at the same time overtake all the enemies of the gospel, assuring them of his constant prayers for their farther improvement in the Christian character, in order to their attaining the felicity that was promised; chap. i. throughout.—But, lest by mistaking the meaning of what he had said or wrote to them at any time upon that subject, or by any other means they should be deceived into an opinion that the judgment-day was near at hand, he informs them, that before this awful period there would be a grand apostacy in the church, and an antichristian power, which he calls *the man of sin*, would arise, and greatly obstruct the progress of the gospel, arrogantly assuming to itself the Divine authority, and by pretended miracles leading multitudes into the grossest and most fatal delusions. Some beginnings of this spirit he observes were already discoverable, and as soon as those restraints which then lay upon it were removed, it would break out in all its force, and continue to spread its malignant influence, till it should be finally destroyed by the coming of Christ; chap. ii.—1 12.——These views lead him to express his thankfulness to God, that the Thessalonians had escaped this corruption which began so early to prevail in the church, and had given such proofs of their entering into the true spirit and genius of Christianity, by the happy effect their belief had produced upon their lives and characters. But, lest they should think themselves secure, he exhorts them to stedfastness and constancy in their profession of the truth, and adds his earnest supplications for their increasing comfort and establishment. At the same time he desires their prayers that his labours might be attended with the same success amongst others as they had been amongst them; and that he might be delivered from the opposition that was made to him by unreasonable men, expressing withal his cheerful confidence in their continued regards to the instructions he had given them, ver. 13.—Chap. iii. 1—5.

The apostle, having borne so honourable a testimony to the character of the Thessalonians in general, proceeds to give them directions for their conduct towards some irregular members of the society, and charges them to withdraw themselves from those that behave disorderly, and, neglecting the proper business of their calling, busied themselves impertinently in the concerns of others. He exhorts such to attend to their own affairs, and carefully to provide for their own subsistence, that they might not be a burden to others. And, to add greater weight to his admonitions, he reminds them of the example he had set them while at Thessalonica, in maintaining himself by the labour of his own hands, though, considering his character as an apostle, he had certainly a right to have been supported at their expence. If any one, notwithstanding, should refuse to comply with this exhortation, or with those he had given them in his former epistle, he directs his Christian friends to exclude him from their familiarity and friendship, that he might be made sensible of his fault; yet he advises them to treat him not as an enemy, but to admonish him as a brother. The apostle having thus sufficiently instructed the Thessalonians in their duty on this important article, concludes with his usual salutation, written with his own hand.

The attentive reader will easily perceive that this, though the shortest of all St. Paul's epistles to the churches, is not inferior to any of them in the sublimity of the sentiments, and in that excellent spirit by which all the writings of the apostle are distinguished. Besides those marks of its genuineness and Divine authority, which it bears in common with the rest of these epistles, it has one peculiar to itself, from the exact representation it contains of the papal power, under the characters of the *man of sin*, and the *mystery of iniquity*. For, considering how directly opposite the principles here described were to the genius of Christianity, it must have appeared, at the time when this epistle was written, highly improbable to all human apprehension.

that they should ever have prevailed in the Christian church; and consequently a prediction like this, which answers so exactly in every particular to the event, must be allowed to carry its own evidence along with it, and to prove that the author of it wrote under a Divine influence. For a farther illustration of this argument, see Dr. Benson's Dissertation on the Man of Sin.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

SECT. I.

The apostle expresses his joy in the constancy with which the Thessalonians adhered to the Christian cause, and animates them against the persecutions to which they were still exposed, by the prospect of that glory that would be conferred upon them at the coming of Christ. 2 Thess. I. 1. *throughout.*

2 THESSALONIANS I. 1.

2 THESS. I. 1. PAUL, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ:

SECT. I. 2 Thess. I. 1.

PAUL and Silvanus, or Silas, *and Timothy*, being still continued together, renew the address we formerly made *to the church of the Thessalonians*; which is now by Divine goodness *in* a state of union and friendship with *God, our* great and ever-blessed *Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ*; having been so happy as some time since to receive the gospel, and still to retain the

2 Grace unto you, profession of it. And we must now, as before, 2 express that sincere benevolence, which reigns in all our hearts towards you, by wishing, as

SECT. I. 2 Thess. 1. 2.

we then did, the communication of *grace to you, and* abundance of *peace*, tranquillity, and happiness, *from God our Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ.*

and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We sincerely sympathize with you in all your trials, yet we are sensible, that *we ought always to give thanks to God on your account, brethren, as it is fit* and reasonable, *because your faith*, notwithstanding all that is done to blast it, and trample it down, *groweth exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all towards one another aboundeth* more and more: your faith drawing new confirmation from your sufferings, and your sense of them engaging you tenderly to pity, and to do your utmost for the relief of those who share in them, and at the same time endearing to you that one body which the world so cruelly hates, and so maliciously endeavours to destroy. And these good dispositions are through the Divine grace, *so* remarkable in you, *that we do ourselves* indeed *boast of you in* all *the churches of God* to whom we come, *on account of your* unwearied *patience and* lively unshaken *faith in* the midst of *all your persecutions, and* the various *tribulations* of one kind and another *which you endure*; [*Which shall,*] on the whole, appear to [*be*] so far from proving inconsistent with the honour of the Divine government, that, on the contrary, they shall terminate in *a* glorious and advancing *display of the righteous judgment of God,*[a] *that ye may be approved* in some degree *worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer*; that ye may appear by these trials to be possessed of such integrity and patience, of such meekness and superiority to this transitory world, as to be fit for those seats of superior dignity and blessedness on which you are to enter. It shall also be the means of displaying the Divine justice, in the punishment to be inflicted on your implacable enemies; *for* [*it is*] *a* most *righteous* and honourable *thing with God, to repay tribulation to them who bring tribula-*

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth:

4 So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

5 *Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

[a] *A display* &c.] Perhaps ἔνδειγμα may further imply, that the sufferings of good men and the triumphant prosperity of their persecuting enemies, should not only *terminate* in such a *display* of Divine vengeance, but that these seeming irregularities do even *now* declare, that there shall be such a day of retribution.

SECT. I.

2 Thess. I. 7.

tion on you, accounting with them in the great day for all the evils they have inflicted on you unprovoked, and while you were engaged in the most equitable and benevolent cause. *And*, on the other hand it will appear equally suitable to the honour of the Divine government, to repay *unto you who suffer* this *tribulation rest with us*, if not in the present world, where we do not ourselves expect it, yet at last *in the revelation of the Lord Jesus* Christ *from heaven, with his mighty angels*, who shall be the ministers of his power in the execution of his great and awful judgment. And nothing can be more comfortable to the persecuted saint, than to think of this illustrious appearance, when Jesus shall descend in his Father's glory and his own, surrounded *with flaming fire, to execute vengeance on those who know not God*, but presumptuously neglect and despise the intimations, yea and the express declarations, of his will with which he has favoured them; *and* especially to inflict deserved punishment upon *those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, though they have received it in all its evidence. They *who* add the rejection of that to all their other crimes, can expect neither remedy nor mercy, but *shall* assuredly *be punished* [*with*] *eternal destruction*, which shall, as it were, break forth like lightning upon them, *from the face of the Lord*[b], *and* drive them *from* his presence, as it will be utterly impossible for them to stand against *his glorious power*, which will be armed for their ruin, and shine forth with irresistible brightness and majesty. *When he shall come to be glorified in* the full assembly of *his saints, and to be admired*[c] *in* the efforts of his almighty power and love, for the complete salvation of *all them who believe*. They shall be accomplished *in that* glorious *day*, to which our

7 And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

8

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

9

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe

10

[b] *From the face of the Lord.*] Bishop Hopkins has justly observed, (Hopkins's Works, p. 370.) that this phrase expresses not only that they shall be *expelled* from that joy and glory which reigns in the presence of Christ, but that his *presence* shall appear *active* in the infliction of their punishment, so that they shall, as it were, be blasted by the lightning of his eye.

[c] *To be admired.*] This strongly implies, not only that the *saints themselves* shall *admire* at what he does for them, so far above all their expectations and conceptions, but that it shall *reflect* an admirable *glory* upon our Redeemer, in the judgment of all who shall be spectators of it.

SECT. 1. faith and hope have been so long directed, and in which the promises of his covenant do so remarkably centre. It is the hope and joy of all his people, and it is yours in particular; *because our testimony among you was credited*, and you have given substantial evidences, that your faith
11 was cordial and sincere. *In which regard*, as we rejoice in what is already done, and have the tenderest concern that the precious seed we have sown may answer the hope with which we see it springing up, and at length advance to full maturity, *we* continue to *pray always for you, that our God would*, by the working of his grace, *render you* more and more *worthy of* [*this*] high and holy *calling*, *and* would *fulfil* in you *all the good pleasure of* [*his*] *goodness*[d], all that amiable and happy temper which his paternal regard to our happiness engages him to recommend and require. *And* to speak all in one word, that he would accomplish and perfect *the work of faith with power*, that is, would powerfully impress upon your hearts the great principles of that religion which he hath revealed to you, and which you have embraced; since nothing can tend more effectually to produce and nourish every good disposition in your
12 mind. *That* so *the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you*, while you act in a manner so suitable to the relation you bear to him: *and* that *you* may also be glorified *in him*, may now have the honour of approving yourselves his faithful servants, the excellent of the earth, and may for ever share in the glory he hath prepared for such; *according to the grace of our* merciful *God, and* of *the Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom it is so plentifully bestowed upon us.

(because our testimony among you was believed) in that day:

11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power:

12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[d] *Good pleasure of his goodness.*] Mr. Blackwall would render it *the benevolence* of his goodness, and says, it is the shortest and most charming representation any where to be found, of that *infinite goodness* which surpasses all expression, but was never so happily and properly expressed as here. Blackwall's Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 242. We may add, that εὐδοκία seems at once to express, that it is *sovereign pleasure*, and also that he feels, as it were, a *sacred complacency* in the display of it. And for that reason I chose rather to retain, with our received version, *good pleasure*, than to substitute the word *benevolence* in its stead.

IMPROVEMENT.

How wisely has the apostle chosen the representation we have now been reading, to promote the glory of our Saviour's name, by strengthening the saints who are already established, and awakening any who might be careless and irregular, by the very same considerations, which may so justly awe and intimidate the enemies of the church! How forcible in all these views is the description we here read, of the glorious and triumphant appearance of our Lord! Let it be ever placed before our eyes. He shall surely *come in flaming fire, to take vengeance* on all his enemies. The troublers and persecutors of his people shall have their peculiar share in it, and it is most righteous with God that they should. Yet it is not intended for them alone, but for all who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ. How diligently should we examine, what our knowledge of God is, and what our obedience to his gospel! whether the one be merely speculative, and the other verbal, or our knowledge practical, and our obedience sincere and universal! Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, is a vengeance dreadful enough, one would imagine, to awaken, even by its distant sound, all who are are not sunk into the last and lowest degrees of insensibility. *Who can stand in his presence when once he his angry?* Who can resist his power? But there are a happy number, who shall be glorified by him, and, which should give us peculiar joy, in whom he also shall be admired and glorified in that day, and for ever. The holy and blessed creation of God shall see to all eternity, from what ruin Jesus could raise, and to what felicity he could exalt those who were once the captives of Satan, the slaves of sin, and the heirs of death and hell. May the expectations of it influence our hearts in a suitable manner! May all the good pleasure of God's goodness be fulfilled in us, and the work of faith with power! Then while our faith groweth exceedingly, our mutual love will abound, our patience will be adequate to every trial, and we shall be approved, as in some measure, through Divine grace, worthy of that kingdom to which God hath called us.

SECT. I. Ver. 12. 6 8 9 10 11 3 4 5

SECT. II.

Paul cautions the Thessalonians against expecting the day of judgment immediately, and foretels the appearance of antichrist that was first to come. 2 Thess. II. 1—12.

2 THESS. II. 1. 2 THESSALONIANS II. 1.

NOW we beseech I SPOKE in my former letter of the coming of Christ, and I have just been mentioning it to

SECT. II.

2 Thess. II. 1.

you again; *but* I am afraid you should misunderstand what I have written upon that subject, and therefore, *I* must *beseech you, brethren, with respect to the* intended and much desired *appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ,*[a] *and our gathering together unto him,* of which I then spoke,

2 *That ye be not soon moved from* [*the steadiness of your*] *mind, nor troubled, either by the* suggestion of any pretended *spirit* of prophesy and revelation in others, *or by* the report of any *word,* which we may be said to have dropped, *or by* the sense which any may put upon what we have written in the former *epistle,* which you have really received, or any other which may be brought to you, *as from us, as if the* great *day of Christ were* just *at hand,*[b] and to be con-

3 tinually looked for. *Let no man deceive you by any means* which he may use so as to persuade you of this, lest, finding yourselves mistaken in that expectation, you should be brought to doubt of the faith you have received, or, in apprehension of so speedy a dissolution of the world, you should be less attentive to some of its concerns than duty or prudence will require. *For* you may be assured, with respect to this great and important day, that [*it shall not come*] *till there come first an* amazing and shameful *apostacy*[c] in the Christian church itself; *and the*

you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come* except there come a falling-away first, and that

[a] *The appearance of our Lord.*] Craddock would render ὑπερ της παρουσιας, *concerning the appearance,* as if he had said, with relation to what I wrote in the former epistle of *Christ's coming,* and our *being caught up into the air to meet him,* (compare 1 Thess. iv. 17.) supposing ὑπερ to be used for περι here, as it certainly is, 1 Cor. viii. 23; and Vitringa (Observ. lib. i. cap. vi. § 6.) has said so much to vindicate it, that I could not but prefer this rendering. Mr. Howe takes it as we do in our translation, and speaks of it as the most *solemn adjuration* in the Bible; (Howe on the Spirit, Vol. II. p. 70.) and then shews how pernicious the consequences of that error might have been, which the apostle endeavours so solicitously to guard against.

[b] *The day of Christ were at hand.*] Yet it was what the *primitive Christians* confidently expected, and some tell us, they were the more desirous of martyrdom, that they might not be spectators of so dreadful a scene as they supposed it would be. See Reeve's Apol. Vol. I. p. 30. But if it really were so, it was an instance of a double mistake in these good men.

[c] *An apostasy.*] Dr. Whitby understands this, either of the revolt from the Romans, or the falling away of many Christian converts to Judaism, through prejudices in favour of the perpetuity of the Mosaic law or expectations of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, or the fear of persecution; on each of which topics he enlarges with great propriety. And Vitringa is large in shewing, that great apostasy prevailed in the Christian church, between the days of Nero and Trajan. (Observ. lib. iv. cap. 7.) Yet I have thought it my duty to explain this difficult but important context, as referring to what Mr. Joseph Mede, with so great propriety calls *the apostasy of the latter times,* and I must refer to his learned

man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition:

man of sin be revealed, that antichristian power, which is to raise itself by such enormous mischiefs; yet it is so surely doomed to destruction, by the just though long delayed vengeance of God, that I cannot forbear calling him that assumes it, *the son of perdition*, as our Lord himself called Judas the traitor; (John xvii. 12.)

SECT. II.

2 Thess. II. 3.

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

I now speak of one *who opposes* himself to the interest of true religion, by arts and enterprises in former generations unknown, *and*, as pride often goes before destruction, insolently *exalts himself above all that is called God, or the object of* religious *worship*,[4] taking upon him to controul Divine institutions, and to model every thing according to his own arrogant pleasure. *So that he himself, as God, sets himself in* the church, which is *the temple of God, shewing himself* with such pompous parade, and such despotic authority assumed over the consciences of men, that so far as actions can speak, he in effect asserts *that he is God*, nothing human, and indeed nothing created, having a right so to dictate.

5 Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

This is an event of so great importance, that I have formerly mentioned it. *Remember ye not that being yet with you*, though I spent so very little time among you, *I* nevertheless *told you these things*, and gave you such warnings concerning them as I imagined you could not so soon have forgot? *And now*, though it is a tender subject, which it is not convenient to speak of in too explicit a manner, I persuade myself, that *ye know what restrains him from being revealed in* (what might otherwise seem) *his own time*. *For the mystery of iniquity*, the hidden design of corrupting and overthrowing Christ's kingdom, which has so many artful

6 And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.

7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

and judicious writings on this head, and to Dr. Benson's Dissertation on the Man of Sin, to vindicate the reasonableness of an interpretation which I have by no means room to discuss at large.

4 *Above all that is called God*, &c.] The usurpation of the papacy in Divine things is so unequalled, that if these words are not applicable to it, it is difficult to say, who there ever has been, or can be, to whom they should belong. The manner in which the pope has exalted himself above magistrates, is equally remarkable and detestable; but I do not apprehend it so immediately referred to here, as his taking upon him to controul every thing in religion. Ἐπαίρομαι has exactly the signification here given it. See Acts xvii. 20.

SECT. II.

2 Thess. II. 7.

ways of insinuating itself into the minds of sinful men, and of introducing its own tyrannical, avaricious, and ambitious schemes into the church, *does already* in some measure *work*,[e] amidst all the peculiar engagements to the most humble, disinterested, and upright conduct, which an age and ecclesiastical state like ours brings along with it. *Only there is one that hindereth, till he be taken out of the way*,[f] secular powers at present are a restraint, but when that is taken away, and different scenes in Providence open, these iniquitous principles, that are secretly fermenting, will break out in all their force. *And then the ungodly one shall be revealed*, and appear as it were unveiled in all his native deformity; even he who shall bring the greatest infamy and the greatest misery on the Christian world. Nevertheless, though his reign may be of some considerable duration, it shall not be perpetual; for the Spirit teaches us to regard him as sentenced to inevitable ruin, as one *whom the Lord will* certainly at length *destroy;* and how firmly soever he may seem established *by* human policy and power, he shall find himself unable to withstand *the breath of his mouth*, which shall kindle all around him a consuming flame, in which all his pomp and pride shall vanish. *And* indeed he will not only in some measure humble and abase, but

ready work: only he who now letteth, *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

8 And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall de-

[e] *The mystery of iniquity doth already work.*] As Dr. Whitby explains the *man of sin*, of the *rebellious* and *unbelieving Jews*, he must of course explain this, of the turbulent and seditious principles which evidently prevailed among them; and it is agreeable to his scheme to interpret the impediment spoken of in the next clause, of Claudius Cæsar, whose favours obliged them so, that they could not immediately break out, but who was soon taken away by a violent death, which gave them the opportunity they seemed so much to wish for. See Whitby in loc. But it appears much more reasonable to understand the passage before us of the *antichristian spirit* which began to work in the Christian church then, in the pride and ambition of some ministers, the factious temper of many Christians, the corruption of many Christian doctrines, the imposing unauthorised severities, the worship of angels, &c. of all which things the papacy availed itself, for acquiring and exercising its iniquitous dominion; and *to he that hindereth* will refer to the *imperial power*, of which we shall presently speak, but of which prudence obliged St. Paul to write with a caution, which unavoidably occasioned some obscurity.

[f] *There is one that hindereth*, &c.] Dr. Geddes very properly explains this of the Roman Emperor, who would not suffer ecclesiastical power to grow to an exorbitant height, while he held his seat at Rome. See Geddes's Tracts, Vol. II. p. 10; and as many good modern commentators give it the same turn, so it is observable, that Tertullian, Augustine, and Chrysostom all agree, in saying, that *Christ* was not to appear till after the fall of the Roman empire. See Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. II. p. 198.

stroy with the brightness of his coming:

utterly eradicate and *abolish* him, *by the* resplendent *brightness of his coming*, when truth shall beam in upon men's minds with all its energy, and its most formidable enemies shall fall before it. SECT. II. 1 Thess. II. 8.

9 *Even him* whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,

In the mean time, the monster of iniquity shall prevail, [*even he*] *whose coming is according to the energy of Satan*, whose interest he shall re-establish, where it seems to be overthrown. That malignant and deceitful spirit shall therefore endeavour to promote this anti-christian kingdom to the utmost, *by all lying power, and signs, and wonders*,[a] by a variety of fictitious miracles, so artfully contrived and so strongly supported by an abundance of false testimonies, that many shall be entangled, deceived, and undone by them. 9

10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And in the conduct of this most iniquitous design, recourse will be had to *all manner of unrighteous deceit*, which shall be managed with the utmost art and address, *among those* wretches, *who shall* many of them finally *perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved* by it, but preferred those secular views which such dishonest practices promoted, to the great prospects of their everlasting happiness in an invisible world. 10

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

And for this cause, when they have for a limited time been permitted to trifle with the message of his mercy, and the strivings of his spirit, *God will* in righteous judgment give them up to a reprobate and insensible mind, and will *send upon them the energy of deceit*;[b] he will suffer them to deceive others, till they are deceived themselves too; *so that they shall believe the lie* which they have so long taught: 11

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

That they may all be condemned at last, *who believed not the truth*, though offered to him with sufficient evidence, *but*, on the contrary, *had pleasure in unrighte-* 12

[a] *Lying powers, signs and wonders.*] It is certain that the construction will very well allow us to refer ψευδους to all the preceding words, as well as the last; and nothing seems so natural as to refer the whole to the *fictitious miracles of the church at Rome*, which have grown up to such a degree of extravagance and effrontery, as even to make their own popes ashamed.

[b] *Energy of deceit.*] Those most ridiculous popish legends, which have yet gained such credit as to be admitted into their public offices, furnish out a most affecting comment upon these words.

SECT. II. 2 Thess. II. 12.

ousness,[i] and imposture, when it might serve their present interest, to which all considerations of conscience and honour, religion, and future hope, were sacrificed. And this I leave upon record, that such as are not entirely incorrigible, may be alarmed by this dreadful representation, and that others may be warned to stand at the remotest distance from the tents of these wicked men, and, though it should be at the greatest hazard, to maintain the cause of God and of truth against them.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold with humble reverence the depths of the Divine counsels and judgments: God hath been pleased to suffer the craft of Satan to display itself, in reducing from his allegiance a great part of the Christian world, yet has he taken the wise in his own craftiness, so far as to make that very apostacy from Christianity, an additional proof of its Divine original. Who that had only examined the genius of that holy religion, could have imagined that such a mystery of iniquity should have arisen in it, and that man of sin have been revealed? Surely, when the particulars of the description come to be compared with the accomplishment, it may seem owing to some judicial infatuation, that men of deep policy and great penetration, with this very passage of scripture in their hands, should have suffered the marks of antichrist to be so very apparent, even in many instances, beyond what might have seemed absolutely necessary for establishing that secular kingdom which they sought; particularly, that the pope on high days should set himself on a high throne, in the temple of God, to be there solemnly adored, and should have permitted his parasites so expressly to boast that he is God, and to give him, in some of their licensed and authorised works,[k] Divine titles.

Verse 3 7 4

The scandalous and extravagant pretences which the followers of the papacy have made to miracles, exceeding in number, and

[i] *Had pleasure in unrighteousness.*] I cannot but think this refers to many of the priests and others in the Romish church, who impose on the people known delusions, merely out of regard to secular interest; and it wears so dreadful an aspect on such, and on those, who, on the like principles, act the same part in the protestant world, if such there be, that I cannot but hope it may be the means of producing in time, some great reformation, when it shall please God powerfully to impress on the professed teachers of others, a serious sense of the importance of their own salvation, and to make them feel how contemptible all worldly emoluments are, when compared with truth of doctrine, and purity of worship and discipline.

[k] *Divine titles.*] See Mr. Barker's sermon at Salter's Hall, in the lecture against Popery; and Mr. Chandler's account of the conference in Nicholas-lane.

some of them in marvellous circumstances, those of Christ and his apostles, plainly display the energy of Satan, that father of frauds, pious and impious. And the most incredible lies, which they have, by solemn and irrevocable acts, made essential to their faith, shew the strength of delusion, beyond what could have been imagined, had not fact led us into the theory. How dreadful is it to think of some of the expressions which the spirit itself uses, when speaking of these artifices in deceit!—that they should be abandoned by God to believe a lie, that they may all be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness,—that they might bring upon themselves eternal aggravated damnation. Who would not tremble, who would not grieve for so many of our fellow men, yea of those, who, degenerate as their form of Christianity is, we must yet call our fellow Christians, who are thus dishonoured, enslaved, and endangered? The Lord grant that they may not be utterly undone! Let them despise us, let them, by most solemn execrations annually repeated, devote us to destruction, and prepare against us all the instruments of it in their power, yet will we still pray for them. The Lord grant that they may *recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure!* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) Let us recommend to Divine compassion the souls drawn after artful and wicked leaders, in the simplicity of their hearts, and take comfort in this thought, that the time will come, when *the Lord shall destroy this son of perdition with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.* May the remnant of God's people among them take the alarm, *and come out from them* in time, *and be separate*, that they may not be *partakers with them in their plagues*: (Rev. xviii. 4.)

SECT. II. Ver. 9. 11 12 8

SECT. III.

Paul returns thanks to God for his mercy to the Thessalonians in supporting them hitherto, and addresses such exhortations to them, and prayers for them, as might most effectually conduce to their continued establishment, desiring also their prayers for him amidst his various labours and dangers. 2 Thess. II.—13,—*to the end.*—III. 1—5.

2 THESSALONIANS. II. 13.

2 THESS. II. 13. BUT we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of

SUCH corruptions as these will at length arise in the church, and we have hinted that something of this spirit is already beginning to work. *But*, blessed be God that so little of it appears among you; on the contrary, we are sensible that *we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren*, whom we have great reason to

SECT. III. 2 Thess. II. 13.

SECT. III.

address as *beloved of the Lord, because* that cordial zeal with which you have embraced the gospel, and that resolution with which you retain it in the midst of afflictions and persecutions, give us ground cheerfully to conclude, that *God hath*, of his wise counsels and abundant grace, *from the beginning* of his work and plan for the redemption of men, *chosen you to* eternal *salvation*; for a participation of which you are prepared *by* that *sanctification*, which is the work *of the* Holy *Spirit* on your hearts, *and* that *belief of the truth*, which hath so effectual a tendency to promote it.

2 Thess. II. 13.

the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth:

14 This is God's appointed way of obtaining an interest in this salvation, *to which he hath called you by our gospel*, even *to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that glory which his mercy hath prepared, and to which his faithful care shall at length conduct all his obedient followers, in which they shall fully enjoy the rich provisions of his love, and be made like him in holiness and happiness. *Therefore, brethren*, let me exhort you to *stand fast, and* strongly to *retain the instructions which you have learned* of us, *whether by word or by our* former *letter*, as you may be assured you have there a genuine representation of the contents of those important doctrines with which we are intrusted. *And may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us* in so surprising a manner, *and given* [*us*] by his gospel such a fund of *everlasting consolation, and* such *good hope through* his overflowing *grace*, when, without it, we could not have had any glimmering of hope, or prospect of comfort for ever. May he, I say, by the rich communication of his love and mercy, *comfort your hearts, and* may he *strengthen* and confirm *you*, making you ready *for every good word and work*, that his name may be glorified, and your present satisfaction and future reward may abound. *As for what remains*, I shall not enlarge, but must beseech you, *brethren*, that ye would *pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run* a free and unobstructed course every where, *and be* greatly *glorified*,[a]

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

III. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified even as *it is* with you;

[a] *May run and be glorified.*] Some think these words allude to the *applause* given to those that made a speedy progress in the races, which constituted so

SECT. III.

2 Thess. III. 2

2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

as through his grace [*it is*] *among you; And that we*, whom he hath honoured with the office of dispensing it, *may be delivered from unreasonable*[b] *and wicked men*, who are endeavouring as much as possible to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by destroying or confining us. We cannot wonder at it, *for all men have not faith*,[c] and there are so many corruptions opposing its progress, and they are so powerfully abetted by the great enemy of souls, that we have rather reason to admire the Divine agency, in making it so successful as it is.

3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

But, whatever difficulties we meet with, this is our comfort, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whom we devote our labours, and have committed our souls, *is* invariably *faithful; who will strengthen and keep* both us and *you from the evil one* and all his works. He will indeed preserve us from every thing that would on the whole be hurtful to us, and over-rule to our truest good what has the appearance of evil.

4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

And we have a cheerful *confidence in the* fidelity and grace of our blessed *Lord, with respect to you*, that by his powerful influence you are and will be established in every good resolution, so *that* in every instance *ye both do and will do the things which* in his name *we give you in charge.*

5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

And may we have the pleasure of seeing this our confidence happily answered more and more! *May the Lord direct your hearts into* more vigorous and constant exercise of *the love of God, and into the* exercises of that *patience* under all your trials and afflictions which becomes the disciples *of Christ*,[d] and is agreeable to his example.

important a part of the Grecian games.

[b] *Unreasonable.*] Bishop Wilkins observes that ατοπος may signify *absurd, contumacious* persons, who are not to be fixed by any principles, and whom no topics can work upon. Wilkins of Nat. Rel. p. 34. Many such remain among us even to this day.

[c] *By faith.*] By *faith* some understand a principle of *honesty*, which may encourage a confidence to be reposed in them. Howe of the Spirit, Vol. II. p. 192. But I rather understand it of that *upright* and *candid* disposition which would engage men to receive the testimony of the apostles.

[d] *The patience of Christ.*] We render it, *the patient waiting for Christ*, but υπομονην του χριστου, may rather signify *Christian patience*, or that patience with which Christ himself suffered the many injuries and afflictions through which he passed.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. III. Ver. 13. How wisely and happily does the apostle unite the views of the grace of God and the duties of men, while he represents our choice to salvation in a light so worthy of God, since this salvation is still to be obtained through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth! Our spirits must be sanctified by the operation of the Divine Spirit: the truth must be not only speculatively, but powerfully and practically believed, or all our hopes will be vain. But surely, were it possible that salvation could any other way be obtained, it would be much less desirable, or rather that which did not imply a sanctified spirit, and an heart open to receive and obey the truth, would not deserve the name
14 of salvation. Blessed be God, who in this view hath *called us*
16 *to obtain* salvation and *glory by Jesus Christ*, even *God our Fa-*
17 *ther who hath loved us.* From him do these *everlasting consolations flow.* It is by his blessed and gracious operations we are
Chap. iii. 5. *strengthened and established in every good word and work.* His fidelity stands engaged to do it, if we humbly commit ourselves to him, and wait upon him. The prayers of the apostles, dictated no doubt from above, concur with the promises to encourage our hopes, that he will *direct our hearts into the love of God and the patience of Jesus Christ.* On the exercise of that love and that patience doth the happiness of life chiefly depend. Too ready are our weak hearts to wander from it, and to faint under the difficulties that lie in our way. Let us call on him to preserve and maintain the graces he hath implanted, that they may be exerted with growing vigour and constancy even unto the end.

2 Unreasonable and wicked men will oppose the progress of the gospel, which has so powerful a tendency to promote holiness and comfort; and, as there are those that have not faith, they will be ready to labour its destruction. But when the prayers
1 of Christians are frequently engaged, that the word of God may run and be glorified, there is great reason to hope that much of their perverse opposition may be over-ruled to most contrary purposes, so that the *wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of that wrath be restrained*; (Psal. lxxvi. 10.)

SECT. IV.

The apostle concludes his epistle with giving some directions as to the strenuous exercise of discipline, with respect to some disorderly persons, and with renewed prayers for the prosperity of the church at Thessalonica. 2 Thess. III. 6—*to the end.*

2 THESSALONIANS III. 6.

2 THESS. III. 6.

A ZEALOUS regard for the honour of our Divine Master requires me to inculcate

NOW we command

SECT. IV.

2 Thess. III. 6.

you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

on the churches under my inspection, a strict care in the exercise of discipline; and I heartily wish there were nothing in your circumstances which particularly demanded my farther admonitions on that head. *But*, as many good men are ready to be too remiss here, from a fear of displeasing others, and making themselves enemies, *we* solemnly *charge you, brethren, in the* awful and beloved *name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, the credit and progress of whose religion is so nearly concerned in the matter, *that ye withdraw yourselves from any brother*, whatever his rank, circumstances, or profession may be, *who* in the conduct of his life *walks irregularly, and not agreeably to the instruction which he hath received from us*, with regard to the grand rules of Christian morality. I speak freely on this head, *for ye yourselves know how it becomes you* in this respect *to imitate us; for we were not* in any instance *irregular among you*, but endeavoured to behave so as to recommend and enforce our doctrine by our example. *Neither did we eat any man's bread at free cost*, when we had an opportunity of subsisting gratis, at the expence of any particular persons or families, *but with* diligent *labour*, and frequently with very tedious *and* wearisome *toil, we wrought* with our own hands, in that profession which we had learned, and this, *night and day*,[a] *that we might not be burdensome to any of you*, and give you the least room to suspect that we had any secular views in the doctrine we brought you, or that indolence led us to engage in preaching it. *Not that we are destitute of authority*, from the reason of things, and the express commission of Christ himself, to take a moderate subsistence from the persons in whose instruction, we employ our time and strength; for the Lord himself hath ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel: *but* we declined using that liberty, *that we might exhibit ourselves to you* [*as*] *an example, that ye might imitate us*

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought: but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

[a] *Night and day.*] This expression seems to intimate, that the apostle was sometimes obliged to sit up a part of the night at his business as a *tent-maker*, that he might have the day at leisure to preach to those that came to him for religious instruction.

SECT. IV.

in a frugal and industrious life. *And* ye know, that, *even when we were* yet *with you, we* were so fearful of any irregularity in this respect, that we expressly *gave this in charge to you, that if any one would not work, neither should he eat;* that no idle drones should consume the common stock, and quarter himself freely on the diligent and laborious, but rather be brought under a necessity of working, to relieve his own want, if he would not do it from a sense of social duty and good order.

2 Thess. III. 10

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

11 We now insist upon this the more largely, *for we hear that there are some among you who walk irregularly, not* prudently *working at all* for their own honest subsistence, *but impertinently busy* in attending to the concerns of others.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12 *They who are of such* a character *therefore, we* solemnly *charge and* tenderly *entreat, by* the dear and venerable name of *our Lord Jesus Christ, that working with quietness*, and silently pursuing their proper business, *they eat* what may with justice be called *their own bread*, not supporting themselves with what has been purchased by the labours of others, while they continue unprofitable to society.

12 Now them that are such we command, and exhort, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

13 *And as for you*, my *brethren*, the wiser and sounder part of the church, I would fain animate and exhort you, that ye *faint not*, nor be discouraged [*while*] you are engaged in a course of *well-doing*;[b] prosecuting those actions which are fair, beautiful, and honourable, however men may censure you, or whatever difficulties may lie in your way, yea, though some should ungratefully abuse your goodness.

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.

14 *But if any one is not obedient to our word*, whether spoken to you during our short abode, or signified *by this*, or my former *epistle, set a mark upon that man*, whoever he be, *and have no* familiar *converse with him, that* so, seeing himself shunned by his brethren, whose esteem it is natural for every one to wish, *he may be ashamed*, and by that shame may be recovered[c] from those irre-

14 And if any man obey not your word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

[b] *Faint not while well-doing.*] Diodate gives it this excellent turn; though some may abuse your liberality, be not deterred thereby from works of charity.

[c] *That shame be recovered.*] Some would render ἵνα ἐντραπῇ, *that he may be reclaimed by shame*; but I thought it better to insert the additional words in the paraphrase, than the version.

SECT. IV.

gularities which have engaged you to avoid his company, and made his friendship for the present infamous. *Yet account* [*him*] *not as an enemy*, nor do any thing in the least to hurt him in his secular affairs, or to exasperate his irregular passions, *but admonish* [*him*] *as a brother*, and, with faithful love to his soul, as well as a tender concern for the edification of the church, and credit of religion, labour for his recovery.

2 Thess. III. 15.

15 Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

And *now*, to conclude, *may* Jesus, *the* great *Lord of peace*, who hath established concord between heaven and earth, and so effectually provided for uniting the hearts of men in the most pacific and friendly bonds, *himself give you peace at all times by every means*. May all the dispensations of his providence, in every place and circumstance of life, concur to advance the serenity and happiness of your minds: and for this purpose, *may the Lord* continually [*be*] *with you all*.

16 Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

Thus far I have dictated to the person whose assistance I use in writing this; but now I will take the pen myself, and add *the salutation by the hand of me Paul, which is the token in every epistle*;[d] for *so*, to prevent counterfeits, *I write*, that the several churches may be secure that what is thus signed is genuine. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* [*be*] *with you all*, and may you enjoy all the happy consequences that flow from the most plentiful communication of it! To which I am sure you will put your hearty *amen*, as I do mine.

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 18

MAY the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, given in a richer abundance to his churches, animate and engage them to maintain that discipline which is so necessary to his honour and to

[d] *The token in every epistle.*] I think it very evident, from this and several other passages, that Paul, not being very familiarly used to Greek characters, and perhaps to save time, every moment of which he knew how to estimate, used to dictate to some ready scribe, perhaps sometimes while his hands were employed in the labours of his trade. And this may account for some small *inaccuracies* of style at which little minds have been offended, and which some, who seem to carry their scrupulosity to an excess, have been over-solicitous to vindicate, but which they, who read with any thing of the temper of the writer, will easily know how to excuse.—What was hinted before in this epistle, (chap. ii. 2.) may be an intimation, that some fictitious letters were early written in his name, by which St. Paul might be induced to add this token with his own hand.

SECT. IV. their own comfort and edification. Scarcely can we say which is more to be lamented, the neglect of the thing, or the abuse of the name. It never could be the design of the wise Legislator Ver. 11. of the church, that secular terrors should be pressed into his service, that fines, imprisonments, and civil incapacities should be the result of censures passed in his peaceful and benevolent name. Irregularities, in those that call themselves his followers, are in- 6 deed to be observed and discountenanced. Offenders are to be admonished, and, if lighter admonitions succeed not, they are to be avoided; but still in a view of recovering them by an ingenu- 14 ous shame, (if any remainder of it be left in their hearts) from those practices, which, if connived at, would soon become the shame of the society. Thus far therefore, let us resolutely carry our censures, separating scandalous persons from our sacramental communion, and declining that familiar converse with those who are so separated, which might lead them to think we privately disregarded these censures which had in public so awful a form; yet at the same time, let us not treat them as enemies, or as those of whose recovery we have no hope, but remember 15 the tenderness of brotherly love, amidst all the severest acts of brotherly reproof, and the common tie of humanity, to those whom we are commanded to regard only as heathens or publicans.

11 May there be in the professed disciples of Jesus, a care to avoid and discourage that sloth and petulance which would make men busy in other people's matters, while they are quite negli- 8, 9 gent of their own. Let us remember the example of the apos- 12 tle, and be solicitous to eat our own bread. So shall we be most likely to enjoy inward peace and satisfaction of mind, and find that relish in the possession of a little which the largest supplies would not give to them, who are conscious to themselves of sloth or dishonesty.

Some worthless people there have always been in every station of life, and under all religious professions, and some idle drones, who are ready to abuse the bounty of others better than themselves. But let us not from hence seek a mean excuse for refusing to such as really stand in need of acts of liberality and 13 charity. Let us not be weary in well-doing; the time of rest and reward will come. While we are waiting for it, the presence of the Lord of peace may be expected, if we take care to adorn his religion by the usefulness, as well as the meekness, of our behaviour, in this world of misery and provocation, through which he hath appointed us to pass, and through which he has himself condescended to pass before us, to make our way safe, and our exit happy.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in the Lesser Asia. His father was a Greek, but his mother, (whose name was Eunice) a Jewess (Acts xvi. 1.) and, as well as his grandmother Lois, a person of an excellent character (2 Tim. i. 5.) The pious care they took in his education soon appeared to have its desired success; since we are assured by the apostle, that from a child he was well acquainted with the holy Scriptures. It is not certain when he was converted to the Christian faith; though it is not improbable but it might be in the first visit that Paul and Barnabas made to Lystra, mentioned Acts xiv. when the apostle was stoned by the malice of the Jews and left for dead, to which he refers, 2 Tim. iii. 10. However this be, when St. Paul came unto those parts again, he had the satisfaction to find, not only that Timothy continued stedfast in the profession of Christianity, but was in great esteem with the churches at Lystra and Iconium for his distinguished piety and zeal. The discovery of so excellent a temper promised fair for eminent usefulness, and could not fail of recommending him to the peculiar regard of the apostle, who from that time seems to have fixed upon him as his companion and assistant in his labours. But, as he was a Jew on the mother's side, he judged

it prudent that he should be circumcised before he entered upon his ministerial office; after which he did not scruple to ordain him in a solemn manner by the imposition of hands (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6,) though he was at that time probably not much more than twenty years old. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 12.) From this time we often hear of him as attending the apostle in his travels, and assisting him in preaching the gospel; and from Heb. xiii. 23, we may gather, that he shared with him in his sufferings as well as his labours; to which we may add, that St. Paul has thought fit to join his name with his own in the inscription to several of the epistles, *viz.* 2 Cor. Philip. Coloss. 1, and 2 Thess. and Philem. He appears in every respect to have been eminently qualified for the important office with which he was invested; and the honourable terms in which the apostle always mentions him to the churches, and the confidence which, notwithstanding his youth, he reposed in him upon all occasions, are sufficient to give us a very high idea of his character. And perhaps there was no one of all his companions and fellow-labourers whose sentiments and views of things so exactly corresponded with his own. He appears, from their first acquaintance with each other, to have been particularly concerned to form him for usefulness; and no doubt his principal view, in taking him at first as the companion of his travels, was, that he might be more immediately under his inspection, and enjoy the advantage of his more free and familiar instructions. No wonder then, if the apostle looked upon his pupil with peculiar complacency, and even parental affection, when he saw him answer his fondest expectations, and fill up with so much honour the station he had assigned him. No wonder, on the other hand, that Timothy should discover a filial reverence for a person of St. Paul's venerable character, with whom he had been so intimately connected, and from whom he had received so many and such important favours.

It is well known, that the date of this epistle hath been greatly disputed: to enter largely into the controversy would far exceed the limits allotted to these Introductions. However, as in a work of this kind, the reader may expect

some notice should be taken of a question which is of some importance, and as he may not be furnished with those authors,* who have treated it more fully, I shall here give some account of the principal hypothesis relating to it, and state the evidence with which they are respectively attended.

The hypothesis which seems to have prevailed most generally, is, That it was written about the year of our Lord 58, when Paul had lately quitted Ephesus on account of the tumult raised there by Demetrius, and was gone into Macedonia, Acts xx. 1. And this is the opinion of many learned critics, ancient and modern; particularly of Athanasius, Theodoret, Baronius, Ludovic, Capellus, Blondel, Hammond, Grotius, Salmasius, Lightfoot and Benson.—On the other hand, Bishop Pearson endeavours to prove, that it could not be written till the year 65, between the first and second imprisonment of Paul at Rome; and L'Enfant, without any hesitation, goes into this hypothesis.

It is universally allowed, that St. Paul must have written this first epistle to Timothy at some journey which he made from Ephesus to Macedonia, having, in the mean time, left Timothy behind him at Ephesus; for he expressly saith to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 3, *I besought thee still to abide at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia.* Bishop Pearson accordingly, in order to prove that the date of this epistle was as late as he supposes, having observed that we read only of three journeys of Paul through Macedonia (viz. Acts xvi. 9, 10; Acts xx. 1; and ibid. ver. 3), endeavours to shew, that it could not be written in any of these, and must consequently have been written in some fourth journey, not mentioned in the history, which he supposes was about the year 65, after Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome.——That it was not written at the first or third of these journeys is readily allowed, and it appears from

* See Pearson Op. Post. Diss. 1. C. ix. § 5. p. 75, &c.;
Benson's Propag. of Christianity, Vol. II. p. 167—170;
Witsii Meletem. C. ix. § 3—5.
Boyse's Works, vol. II. p. 293—297.

the whole series of the context in both places; but it is the second that is generally contended for.

Now the bishop supposes, that the epistle was not written at this second journey, because it appears from Acts xix. 22, that Paul did not leave Timothy then at Ephesus, having sent him before into Macedonia, and appointed him to meet him at Corinth. See 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10.——To this it is answered, that though Paul did indeed send Timothy from Ephesus, yet, as we are told that Paul made some stay there after that (Acts xix. 22), Timothy might be returned before the tumult, and so the apostle might, notwithstanding, leave him behind at Ephesus, when he himself set out on his journey for Macedonia. (For it should be observed, that he changed his scheme, and, before he went to Corinth, where he had appointed Timothy to meet him, spent some time in Macedonia; from whence he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians in company with Timothy, who came to him in his return from Corinth, and continued with him while he remained in these parts.) Now that Timothy returned to Ephesus, before the apostle departed, will indeed appear very probable, if, (as Mr. Boyse argues from Acts xx. 31, compared with chap. xix. 8, 10.) St. Paul spent three years at Ephesus, and in the neighbouring parts, and sent Timothy away nine months before the tumult; which would leave him time enough to perform his commission, and return to Ephesus before the apostle had left it. (See Family Expos. Vol. III. sect. 43. note[e], p. 282.)——To which it may be added, that it appears from 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11, which epistle was written from Ephesus, that Paul expected Timothy, after his journey to Macedonia and Corinth, would return to him at that city.

The bishop further objects to the epistle being written at this second journey, mentioned Acts xx. 1; that when the apostle set out he proposed to go into Macedonia, and visit the churches there and in Greece, which must necessarily take up a considerable time; whereas in his epistle to Timothy he speaks of his intention to return very soon. (1 Tim. iii. 14; iv. 13.)—But it is natural

to suppose, that some unforeseen accident might detain him longer than he designed; and, being disappointed of some assistance he expected from Macedonia, he might afterwards send for Timothy to come to him, who, as the passage by sea might be dispatched in a few days, might arrive at Macedon before the apostle wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians.

The bishop further argues, that it appears from the epistle to Titus, as well as from some passages in his epistle to the Philippians, and to Philemon, that Paul actually made another journey into those parts after his first imprisonment at Rome, in which journey he left Titus behind him at Crete, which lay in his way from Rome. (Tit. i. 5.) Now it must be allowed the bishop, that the supposition which Salmasius makes is not at all likely, that Paul touched at Crete when he was going from Achaia to Macedonia, for then he carried a collection with him, (1 Cor. xvi. 1—5; Acts xxiv. 17.) and therefore it was not probable he would go so much out of his way; and when he was about to sail into Syria, and heard that snares were laid for him, (Acts xx. 3.) it is not to be supposed that he would go into the mouth of them; or that he would take up his time in preaching at Crete, when he was in haste to be at Jerusalem, (Acts xx. 16.) or that he would winter at Nicapolis, (Tit. iii. 12.) when winter was passed, and he desired to be at Jerusalem before the passover.—But then it hath been observed, that perhaps the epistle to Titus might be among the first Paul wrote, and his voyage to Crete, one of the many events before his going up to the council at Jerusalem, which in the history of the Acts, Luke not being in company with him when they occurred, hath entirely passed over; and of which there are, notwithstanding, some traces in St. Paul's epistles; particularly 2 Cor. xi. and Rom. xv. 19. Or if it be allowed that the epistle to Titus was written by Paul after his first imprisonment, it will not follow from thence, that the first epistle to Timothy must have been written at the same time. This is a brief account of

the arguments for Bishop Pearson's hypothesis, that this epistle was written about the year 65, with their respective answers.

On the other hand, it is pleaded in favour of the first-mentioned hypothesis, namely its being written in the year 58,

(1.) That when Paul wrote his first epistle to him, Timothy was a young man, (1 Tim. iv. 12, *Let no man despise thy youth*;) which is also referred to, 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11. Now supposing he were only 16 years old when he was converted to Christianity, which was in the year 46, he would in the year 58 be about 28 years of age; but in 65, the time when Bishop Pearson supposes the epistle was written, he would be 35, and past a youth, 30 being the age at which the Levites were, according to the law, to enter upon their office. And whereas it hath been objected to this observation, that even in his second epistle, which is supposed to be written some years after his first, he is cautioned to flee youthful lusts; it may be replied, that though he were indeed at that time in the meridian of life, yet he was not out of the reach of such temptations, though the season of youth be more peculiarly liable to them. Besides, the admonition might be intended to suggest this thought, that, having outgrown youth, he ought to be so much the more superior to them.

(2.) It is observed, that the state of things in the church of Ephesus in 58, better suits the contents of the first epistle than it does in 65 For instance, it appears from chap. i. 3, 4, 6, 7, and other passages, that those corruptions which the apostle speaks of as greatly increased and risen to a considerable height, when he met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, and when he wrote his second epistle, were just beginning to creep into the church at the time of his writing the first.—To which it may be added, that from the particular instructions Paul, in his first epistle, gives Timothy about ordination, it seems as if the church of Ephesus, and those in the neighbourhood, had few or no bishops at the time it was written; from whence it appears extremely probable, that the meeting between Paul and the elders, or bi-

shops, of Ephesus, at Miletus, must have been after the writing of this epistle. Mr. Drury, on the other hand, hath pleaded, that when Paul addressed the elders at Miletus, he speaks of these things as future; (Acts xx. 29.) which, when he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, were actually accomplished; such as the trouble they met with from Judaizing teachers, &c. which are the persons he supposes we are to understand by greivous or ravening wolves, in the forecited passage of the Acts; and therefore the epistle must be written after that interview. But, to this it is replied, that the ravening wolves, of which the apostle there speaks, were heathen persecutors, and not such seducers as should arise among themselves.—Some have farther objected, that, even in his epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle does not speak of those evils as having risen to such a height in the church, as he does in his first epistle to Timothy, though the epistle to the Ephesians was undoubtedly written after the interview at Miletus: therefore, the first epistle to Timothy must be written some length of time after that interview. To this it may be justly replied, that, without supposing the apostle to intimate in his first epistle, that the evils referred to had actually prevailed so far, it is certain, from that part of Luke's history which precedes Acts xx. that there was such a bigotted zeal for the Mosaic law, among some professing Christians, as would justify the caution given to Timothy; especially, considering that a great many Jews were always resident in Ephesus. And though in the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul says nothing of Judaizing teachers, (nor of the wolves and perverse men who should arise, against whom, it is certain, he had before the date of it, cautioned the elders at Miletus,) yet many of the advices he gives in that epistle, as well as in this to Timothy, would be of great use in preserving Christians from such dangers. But,

(3.) The argument on which the principal stress hath been laid, in order to prove the date of this epistle to be about the year 58, is taken from the solemn prophetic declaration which Paul made when he took his leave of the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, that they *would never*

see his face any more; (Act xx. 25.) from whence it is inferred, that he must have written his epistle to Timothy before that interview; since in that he not only expresses a full expectation of returning, but speaks of his having just left Ephesus when he set out upon his journey for Macedonia.—The chief objection to this seems to arise from 2 Tim. iv. 20, where St. Paul acquaints Timothy, that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletum, plainly intimating that he had lately been visiting those parts; which, admitting that epistle to have been written but a short time before his death, will indeed prove that he took another journey into Asia after his first imprisonment: but we cannot certainly infer from thence, that he must have been at Ephesus. Dr. Whitby and other critics have observed, that the Miletum here mentioned was in Crete, and, consequently, not the same with Miletus near Ephesus, where the apostle had that interview with the elders so often referred to. If it should appear to any most probable on the whole, that St. Paul did take such a journey after his first imprisonment, and make a visit to Ephesus; in order to reconcile it with Acts xx. 25, he must make this supposition, that most of the ministers or elders of Ephesus, and of the neighbouring parts, were, by that time, either dead or removed.——From this detail of the arguments in favour of both these hypotheses, the reader may determine for himself which bids the fairest for truth. See Family Expositor, Vol. III. sect. 45, notes [b], [c]. Compare sect. 43, note [c], and sect. 46, note [r].

Upon examining the contents of this epistle, it appears, that it was principally intended to direct Timothy in managing the affairs of the church while he abode at Ephesus; and particularly to instruct him in choosing proper persons to be set apart for the ministry and other offices in the church, as well as in the exercise of a regular discipline. Another part of the apostle's design was to caution this young evangelist against the influence of those Judaizing teachers, who, by their subtile distinctions and endless controversies, had corrupted the purity and simplicity of the gospel; to press upon

him a constant regard, in all his preaching, to the interests of practical religion, and to animate him to the greatest diligence, fidelity, and zeal, in the discharge of his office.

In pursuance of this design, the apostle, after having saluted his beloved pupil with his usual affection, and reminded him of the reasons for which he left him behind at Ephesus, takes occasion, from the idle speculations and Jewish controversies that had been unhappily introduced into the church, to assert the practical nature and tendency of the Christian doctrine, and from thence to remonstrate against the absurdity of opposing the gospel, out of a pretended zeal for the law; when in reality the great end of the law was much more effectually answered by the gospel, as it not only restrained men from the more open and notorious acts of vice, against which the law was more immediately levelled, but was calculated to raise its votaries to the most sublime heights of virtue, chap. i. 1—11.—The apostle, having mentioned the gospel, cannot forbear digressing, in the fulness of his heart, to express the affectionate sense he had of the Divine goodness in calling him, who had been a persecutor, to the Christian faith and ministerial office, and observes that this favour was extended to him, though so unworthy, as an encouragement to those that should believe in every future age, ver. 12—17. He then goes on to recommend to Timothy a conscientious care in discharging the duties of that sacred office he had committed to him, and reminds him of the fatal miscarriage of some who had apostatised from the faith. In pursuance of this general exhortation, he directs that prayer should be offered up for all men, and especially for princes and magistrates; as it was the great design of Christianity to promote the peace and welfare of communities, and the happiness of the whole human race. And, as the prudent behaviour of all the members of the society was of great importance to the credit of religion, he advises the women to maintain the strictest decency in their dress, as well as modesty and reserve in their whole deportment, walking as persons professing

godliness; and forbids their teaching in public assemblies, as inconsistent with that due subjection to the other sex which he enforces from the scripture-account of the fall, ver. 18, to the end, and chap. ii. throughout.—As one very important part of Timothy's office was to ordain ministers and officers in the church, the apostle proceeds to instruct him in the qualifications necessary both for bishops and deacons. A bishop, or pastor, he describes as a person of a blameless and exemplary character, distinguished for his temperance, moderation, and charity, the husband of one wife, prudent in the management of his own family, not lately converted to the Christian faith, but well furnished with knowledge, and in good repute with his heathen neighbours. His directions for the choice of deacons are nearly the same, which he concludes with representing the advantages that would attend the faithful discharge of that office; chap. iii. 1—13.—And, that, Timothy might be the more concerned to follow his instructions, he speaks in very high terms of the importance of the charge committed to him, and the sublime and excellent nature of the Christian dispensation. Yet he assures him the Spirit had expressly foretold, that apostates should arise in the church, who would corrupt the purity and simplicity of the gospel, requiring abstinence from marriage, and from various kinds of meats, which God had left indifferent, and teaching other doctrines equally false and pernicious, ver. 14, to the end, and chap. iv. 1—5.—As many of the precepts he had given him were of universal concern, he exhorts him to inculcate them upon the society committed to his care, leaving those idle tales, of which the Jewish rabbies were so fond, and confining his discourses to the great truths of practical religion: these, he observes, were the foundation of all their hopes as Christians, and the advancement of these was the great end of all his labours and sufferings.—And, to render his ministry among them successful, he recommends it to him, to maintain such a purity and sanctity of manners as might not only secure him from that contempt to which his youth would

otherwise expose him, but render him a worthy example to the flock. With the same view, he exhorts him to use the utmost diligence in exercising and improving the gifts with which God had honoured him, for the edification of the church and the salvation of souls, ver. 6, to the end.—The apostle then proceeds to lay down some directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances of life, advising him to suit his manner of address to their respective ages and standing in the church. This leads him to give some rules in relation to those widows who were entrusted by the society with some peculiar office, and maintained in the discharge of it out of the public stock. None were to be admitted into this number, but those who, being advanced in life, were destitute of any other support, and had maintained an exemplary character for piety, charity, and every good work; for he observes, the many irregularities into which persons in younger life were often betrayed, was a sufficient reason for excluding them from such a trust; chap. v. 1—16. St. Paul further directs, that a peculiar honour should be paid to faithful ministers, and no accusation received against them, but on the credit of two or three witnesses. And, as a due care in the exercise of Christian discipline was of so much importance to the credit of religion, he gives him a most solemn charge to observe the strictest impartiality in the execution of this difficult part of his office. On the same principles, he admonishes him not to engage too hastily in setting apart any to the ministry, lest he should make himself partaker of their guilt; and from the variety of men's characters, intimates the necessity of prudence and caution in his manner of treating them. To all which he adds some advices relating to the behaviour of servants towards their masters, whether they were heathens or Christians, ver. 17, to the end, and chap. vi. 1, 2.—The apostle having finished his instructions to Timothy in relation to the pastoral office, exhorts him to avoid those false teachers, who, instead of insisting upon the great truths of practical religion, amused their hearers with trifling

controversies, which only served to raise a spirit of envy and contention in the church, while at the same time, under a pretended zeal for the truth, they were really carrying on their own mercenary views. This leads him to caution Timothy against all approaches towards a covetous temper, which he represents as the root of all evil, and to press upon him a constant and growing regard to vital practical godliness, as of the utmost consequence to his own and his people's happiness; chap. vi. 3—12. To give yet greater force to his admonitions, the apostle concludes with a most solemn charge to Timothy, as in the presence of God and Christ, to maintain the purity of the Christian faith as he had received it from him, that it might be preserved uncorrupt till the glorious appearance of Christ at the great day.—After which, he inserts, by way of Postscript, an exhortation to the rich, not to be puffed up with their wealth, but to employ it in acts of charity and beneficence, that they might secure to themselves eternal life; and closes all with renewing his earnest request to Timothy, to keep that gospel he had entrusted with him, and carefully to avoid those empty speculations and vain sophistries by which some had been ensnared, ver. 13, to the end of the epistle.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECT. I.

The apostle Paul, after having saluted Timothy with much affection, and mentioned the reasons of his leaving him at Ephesus, remonstrates against the absurdity of opposing the gospel, out of pretended zeal for the law of God. 1 Tim. I. 1—11.

1 TIM. I. 1,
PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope;
2 Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the

1 TIMOTHY I. 1.

I *PAUL, an apostle of* the Lord *Jesus Christ according to the* gracious *appointment* and command *of God our Saviour, and of the Lord Jesus Christ*, [*who is*] the foundation of all *our hope* of true happiness in this world and the next, Send this epistle *to Timothy*, [*my*] *genuine son*[a]

SECT. I. 1 Tim. I. 1.

[a] *My genuine Son.*] It is not certain from the history, that Timothy was at first converted by Paul; compare, Acts xvi. 1, 2. It seems therefore that he calls him his *son*, chiefly to express the parental affection he had for him, and the complacency he found in that assistance he had received from him in the work of the ministry, and in the *filial* reverence and affection which this excellent young minister expressed to him; nor can we doubt but Timothy had received

SECT. 1.

1 Tim. 1. 2.

in the faith, in whom I see those unfeigned graces of true piety which God hath wrought in his heart by my means, and which I have myself by his grace experienced in mine own. May *grace*, *mercy*, [*and*] *peace* ever be upon thee, *from God*, *our* almighty and ever gracious *Father*, *and* from *Christ Jesus our Lord*, through whom he communicates these blessings to sinful men.

faith: grace, mercy *and* peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

3 *As I entreated thee to continue at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia* (Acts xx. 1,) *that thou mightest charge some* who seemed inclinable to introduce their own corrupt notions into the church, *that they should not teach other doctrine* contrary to the certain truth I had delivered to them), [*so*] I hope thou wilt still be mindful of the exhortations I gave thee, and [*act*] strenu-

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

4 ously upon them. In pursuance of these views, I depend upon it, that thou wilt caution [*and admonish them*] *not to regard* Jewish *fables* [b], *and endless genealogies*, which, intricate as the investigation of them is, the Judaizing teachers are so fond to trace, as thinking so many privileges to depend upon them, *which* indeed *afford matter of* troublesome and angry *debates*, *rather than godly edification in the faith* of Christ, or

4 Neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies; which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith: *so do.*

5 in any of the duties of an holy life. *But* let it always be remembered and considered, that *the* great *end of the* gospel-*declaration is* to promote in the mind, a temper directly opposite to this, even a principle of *love*, and all the genuine expressions of it that can proceed *from a pure heart and a good conscience*, supported *and* animated by *an undissembled faith* in the great

5 Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

6 doctrines it reveals. But these are noble and generous things, for *which*, *some having* greatly *wandered*, *have turned aside to vain* and empty *discourse* and harangue, which could have no tendency to edification, but only express their

6 From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling:

much confirmation in Christianity from the apostle.

[b] *Jewish fables.*] To what a monstrous degree these fables are brought by the rabbins, few are entirely ignorant, though few are so unhappy as fully to know. It is probable, this wild romantic humour might in some measure prevail already as early as the apostle's days, and may be referred to here. By the genealogies afterwards mentioned, I do not, with some commentators, understand the æons of the gnostics, but tables of lineal descent, by which the Jews endeavoured to prove their rights as priests and Levites, or their alliance to the house of David, all which were apparently vain, in the circumstances in which the Jews then were, and in those to which every Christian knew they must quickly be reduced.

SECT. I.

own pride and folly, and feed that of others.

7 Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Desiring to be teachers of the law, and assuming as magisterial airs as any of its professed doctors can do,[c] and yet in the mean time, *neither understanding what they say, nor concerning what they* so confidently *affirm*, while they vent these precarious fancies of their own, as if they were indubitable and self-evident truths, the first principles of all science, human or divine. 1 Tim. I. 7.

8 But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully.

But while I say this, I am very far from having the least design to reflect upon the law of Moses, or upon the precepts of God's natural law: for *we* well *know, that the law* [*is*] good and *excellent*, reasonable in its constitution, and most profitable in its tendency, *if a man use it lawfully*,[d] and according to its original intention. 8

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous

As *knowing this, that a law*, established, as we know that in question to be, with penal sanction, *is not made in* a direct and immediate *reference to a righteous man*,[e] who will indeed 9

[c] *Teachers of the law.*] The word is here νομοδιδασκαλοι, which we render in the evangelists, *doctors of the law*; and though it is not used exactly in that sense here, yet there seems to be some reference to it. This is urged as an argument, that the *false teachers* here referred to could not be the gnostics, who declared an aversion to the *law*; not to insist on the agreement of Irenæus, Clement, and Jerom, in placing Valentinus, Carprocates, and Basilides, the founders of that sect, much lower.

[d] *If a man use it lawfully.*] This plainly intimates, that there were some who abused the *law*, borrowing a pretence from it to condemn some of the best of men, and to subvert the gospel. And whereas some had represented Paul as an *enemy to the law*, he here denies and disproves the charge. The design of the Mosaic law was to direct the conduct of those to whom it was given, and to humble them under a sense of their sin, but it could not be intended to save them by a perfect conformity to it, which was το αδυνατον, *what the law could not do.* Rom. viii. 3.

[e] *A law is not made in reference to a righteous man.*] Δικαιω νομος ου κειται. Some would render it, *does not lie against a righteous man*; but I do not find that this interpretation of the word κειται in this connection, can be justified by sufficient authority, nor would it be very easy to clear up the apostle's argument on that interpretation. The thought seems evidently to be this, That *a law* (for there is no article to determine or confine it to the Jewish,) is chiefly intended to restrain men from actions injurious to the public. What it says therefore chiefly relates to crimes and their punishments; but the genius of Christianity is so sublime, and the character of Christians in the general (at that time) so good, that there is no need of insisting on legal sentences denounced against such enormities, in order to keep them in the course of their duty. I can hardly think with Diodate and L'Enfant, that by the mention of these crimes he intimates, that their Jewish teachers were such wretches as those here spoken of, as if he had said, one of the chief uses of the law is to condemn such as themselves. Such monsters could never have maintained a party in religion, but he might choose these instances as precepts of the law in particular lay against each of them, and as the discourses of these teachers might be a sort of common place, almost entirely levelled against the worst of crimes, and so less suited to the edification of believers. To inculcate it so much upon them, and especially to pretend to condemn them out of it, was therefore an irregular and improper use of the law.

SECT. I.

be a law to himself; *but* in order *to* restrain the irregularities and enormities of *the lawless and ungovernable*, and to preserve society from their assaults. Of these it speaks, to these it directs its menacing voice, even to *the impious and* [*profligate*] *sinners*, to *the unholy and profane*, who disregard the rights both of God and man, to *murderers of fathers and of mothers*, or other

1 Tim. I. 9.

man, but for the lawless and disobedient for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.

10 *assassins.* * To *fornicators and Sodomites*, to *those who steal men*, that they may sell them for slaves. It addresses to *liars* and *perjured persons, and*, in a word, is intended to guard against *whatever is contrary to wholesome doctrine* and good morality, that it may restrain and controul the authors of mischief, and mark them out as the objects of universal abhorrence

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

11 and just punishment. And these things are condemned by every Divine revelation, and by that which we teach in the strongest terms, *according to the* known tenor of the *glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I was intrusted.* This guards against the smallest deviation from the strictest rule of rectitude, and the secret abominations of the heart, as well as the grosser scandals of the life: so that for any out of pretended zeal for such a law to oppose the gospel, must certainly argue the greatest ignorance, or the greatest malice and hypocrisy, that can be conceived.

11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 1. *CHRIST is* indeed *our hope*, or we have nothing which can deserve to be called hope. *For in us he is the hope of glory.* On him therefore let us build, to him let us with the most joyful
4, 6 consent commit our souls, and, dismissing all vain questionings and endless unprofitable controversies, ever attend to godly
5 edifying, and bear in our memories and in our hearts the great end of the commandment. And may the great God of love, work that love in our hearts which is so justly represented in that view; love proceeding from a *good conscience, and from faith unfeigned.*

8 We rejoice in the gospel, and let us reverence the law, and endeavour to use it lawfully and properly. Let it regulate our lives; let it awaken our consciences, and lead us to look for a better righteousness than this alone can afford. Blessed be God, that it
9, 10 is providentially made the means of restraining many who act on motives merely legal, from much wickedness, which they might otherwise commit. But let the *glorious gospel of the blessed God,*

intrusted to the apostle, be the great foundation on which our souls build. It is glorious indeed: may the great Author of it ever be blessed, and the great end of it answered in our hearts, not only in preserving us free from those gross enormities of which the apostle has given so black a catalogue, and against which the law was more immediately directed, but in forming us to a stricter obedience, a sublimer purity, and more exalted hope, than any other dispensation which God himself has given could inspire. SECT. I. Ver. 11.

SECT. II.

The apostle makes a digression to express, in lively terms, the affectionate sense he had of the Divine goodness, in calling him, though most undeserving that favour, to the Christian faith and ministerial office. 1 Tim. I. 12—17.

1 TIMOTHY I. 12.

1 TIM. I. 12. AND I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.

I HAVE just been mentioning the glorious gospel of the blessed God as committed to my trust, *and* as I always recollect that favour with pleasure, so *I* would now, in a particular manner, *return* my *thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath strengthened me* for the arduous duties of such a calling, *that he accounted me faithful,* and reposed so great a confidence in me, *putting me into the* sacred office of the *ministry; Who* 13 *was before a* most impious *blasphemer*[a] of his holy name, *and a* cruel *persecuter* of his people, *and an* injurious *oppressor* of them, in contempt of all rights, human and divine. *But I obtained* that *mercy,* which probably would never otherwise have been extended to me, *because,* though I acted in a very rash, savage, and criminal manner, yet *I* did not therein contradict the sentiments of my conscience, but *did [it] ignorantly*[b] *in unbelief;* whereas if I had knowing- SECT. II. 1 Tim. I. 12.

13 Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

[a] *A blasphemer.*] He had the greater reason to acknowledge this *guilt,* as he had not only spoken evil of *Christ himself,* but encouraged and even compelled *others* to do so. Acts xxvi. 11.

[b] *Did it ignorantly.*] If Paul had an opportunity of knowing more than some others, (compare Luke xxiii. 34.) yet perhaps, being then a scholar at Gamaliel's feet, he might not have been present on the spot when any of Christ's miracles were performed, as Christ spent but little time at Jerusalem. The popular cry was so strongly against him, and the Pharisees and rulers treated him with so much contempt, and were so full of malignity against him, and so ready to advance the most slanderous reports to the

SECT. II.

ly opposed what I apprehended to be truth, out of regard to secular interest, I should doubtless have been left to perish under a judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart. *But the grace of our* blessed *Lord superabounded* towards me, being attended *with* the exercise of *faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*, and which by the influence of his spirit and grace was implanted in my heart, thereby giving life and joy to my profession.

1 Tim. I. 14.

14 And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

15 I cannot therefore but mention *this*, as what [*is*] *a* most *faithful* infallible *saying*, *and worthy of all acceptance*, of being universally received and admitted by every one who hears it, and of being welcomed to the heart, as well as gaining the assent of the understanding, *that Christ Jesus*, the eternal Son of God, though originally possessed of Divine glory with the Father, *came* with infinite condescension *into the world* in which we dwell, *that he might save* from final condemnation and ruin miserable *sinners; of whom*, it becomes me ever with all humility to confess that *I am chief*. For surely there never was, nor ever will be a display of richer and more sovereign grace than that which recovered and transformed me. *But* it was in a great measure *for this cause* that *I obtained* the *mercy* of which I was so unworthy, *that in me, as the chief* of sinners, *Jesus Christ might* display, and, as it were, *exhibit* to the view of the whole world, an example of *all long-suffering*, *as a pattern for* the encouragement of *those who should afterwards believe on him*, even to the remotest ages of time, in order *to* the obtaining *eternal life*. And *now*, when I consider it in this view, I cannot forbear bursting out into a song of praise, and saying, *to the* supreme *King* of universal nature, who reigns through all the unknown extent of boundless ages, and unmeasurable space, who is

15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the

prejudice of his character, that it is the less to be wondered at, that this rash hot youth was borne down by the torrent. Yet we see how far Paul was from thinking *all this*, and whatever could be added to it, a sufficient excuse. Instead of insinuating with some, that the miracle wrought for his conversion to Christianity was a reward for his extraordinary integrity and virtue, while a Jewish zealot, he speaks of himself as one of the greatest sinners upon earth; and thereby shews, by the way, how much guilt a man may contract without acting directly contrary to the convictions of his mind, if he has neglected an impartial care in forming his principles of action.

King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen,

possessed of *eternal* glory and *immortal* life, though *invisible* to mortal eyes; even to *the only wise*, living and true *God*, [*be*] *honour and glory for ever and ever!* for this and every other display of wisdom unsearchable, and goodness inexhaustible. *Amen.*

SECT. II.

1 Tim. I. 17.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can wonder, that a person of Paul's experience and piety, should thus, on the mention of the gospel, digress to indulge his reflections on that singular and astonishing interposition of Divine grace, by which he had been brought to embrace it, and honoured with the charge of it! Who can wonder, that such blasphemies, and such outrages, as he had uttered and committed, such a zeal for persecution as he had exerted, should leave a deep impression on his heart, and engage him, notwithstanding all his care in the externals of the law, and blameless as he was touching all its righteousness, to call himself the first, the chief of sinners, and to celebrate that as superabundant grace, which had been extended to him.

Ver. 12. 13. 14.

Well was he who had received it, thereby fitted to proclaim it to all the world. Let us gladly receive it from the pen of this once malignant and blasphemous persecutor, but now holy and happy apostle, as a most certain truth, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, hath, in unutterable and inconceivable compassion, come into this world of ours to save sinners, even the chief of them. Let us thankfully accept this abridgment of the whole gospel, and apply to the Saviour thus triumphant in mercy, with whatever aggravated guilt our consciences may charge us. Let us also remember, that Paul obtained mercy not on his own account alone, but that the compassions extended to him, might be considered as an example of what this gracious Redeemer is ready to extend to all those who, like him, shall believe. Let us pause upon it, till our hearts glow within us in all thankful acknowledgment of his mercy, and then let our lips burst forth in praise *to the King eternal, immortal and invisible*, to *the only wise God*, who hath found out such an admirable way at once to glorify his justice and his grace, in pardoning and accepting the chief of sinners in his Son. May our hearts be more and more disposed to celebrate his power, wisdom, and goodness, and to begin those songs of praise upon earth, which we hope will be our everlasting employment in heaven!

15. 16. 17.

SECT. III.

The apostle, after recommending to Timothy a conscientious care in the whole of his behaviour, gives and enforces several directions relating to prayer, and to the conduct of women professing godliness. 1 Tim. I. 18—*to the end*, and chap. II. *throughout.*

1 TIMOTHY I. 18.

SECT. III.

1 Tim. I. 18.

THIS charge, which I am now going to give, *I* solemnly *commit unto thee*, my *son Timothy*, as a matter of the highest importance to thy usefulness and success in the ministerial office. As indeed there is nothing which I more earnestly desire, than *that thou mayest, according to former prophecies concerning thee*, with which holy men of God, who knew thee in younger life, were inspired, (being animated *by* a cheerful and believing remembrance of *them*), *maintain* with holy alacrity and resolution *a good warfare*, even that noble and glorious struggle in which thou art engaged, under thy Christian, and especially thy ministerial character, against those enemies that oppose the gospel, and the salvation
19 of men. Go on therefore resolutely, *retaining* the great principles of the Christian *faith*,[a] *and* with it the exercise of *a good conscience: which* last *some having thrust away*, and obstinately opposed its just dictates and remonstrances, *concerning faith have made shipwreck* upon the rocks of surrounding temptations, and so have lost all that precious treasure, by which had it been wisely guarded and improved, they
20 might have been for ever rich and happy. *Of which* [*number*,] among others, *is Hymenæus and Alexander*,[b] with *whom* thou Timothy art not

1 TIM. I. 18.

THIS charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have

[a] *Faith.*] As it is here distinguished from a *good conscience*, it is plain that *faith* here signifies, *an assent to the truth of Christianity*, and consequently all arguments drawn from hence against the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, must be very inconclusive.

[b] *Hymenæus and Alexander.*] Probably this Alexander is the person mentioned Acts xix. 33, who might become worse and worse after Paul's departure from Ephesus, emboldened by his absence: so that the apostle might now be determined to deliver him up to Satan, to inflict upon him certain pains and evils, which might possibly reclaim him. Compare 2 Tim iv. 14, and note there. Mr. Reynolds justly and finely observes (Letter to a Deist, p. 256,) that when the apostles mention the names of apostates, and censure them with such freedom and severity, it affords a plain argument that they knew themselves to be entirely out of their power: for if they had been consci-

delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

unacquainted, and who once professed a great regard to the gospel; but they are now turned apostates, and have behaved in so outrageous a manner, that *I have*, according to that extraordinary apostolic power, with which God hath invested me for such purposes, solemnly *delivered* them both over *unto Satan*, *that they may learn*, by what they now suffer in their afflicted and diseased bodies, *not to blaspheme* the truths of Christ, or to revile his faithful servants, in such profane and wicked language as they have sometimes used when speaking of them.

SECT. III.

1 Tim. I. 20.

II. 1. I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men.

II. 1. But I will proceed in the charge which I proposed to address to thee, that, by a diligent and vigorous performance of thy duty, thou mayest be secure from falling into that miserable state in which thou seest others, who once seemed to set out well. *I exhort* thee *therefore*, *first*, as it is a duty of great importance in itself, and highly subservient to thy success in every other branch of this office, *that* earnest *supplications*,[c] repeated *prayers*, affectionate *intercessions*, [*and*] cheerful *thanksgivings*, *be made* by thee, and those whose devotions may in any degree fall under thy direction, *for all men*, for the whole human race, whether Jew or Gentile, Christian or Pagan, friends or enemies: And particularly 2 *for kings*, *and all who are in* any *exalted stations* of life; that their hearts may be so influenced, as at least to tolerate the gospel, *that we* who are by the principles of our religion taught to abhor every thing which would be injurious to them, *may* not be injured by them, but may be permitted to *pass a peaceful and quiet life*, while *f* we are desirous to conduct ourselves not only without offence, but in a useful and exemplary manner, *in all piety and gravity*, attentive to the several duties which we owe both to God and

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

ous of any thing to be feared from their discovery, they would have endeavoured to manage them more artfully, that they might not provoke them to the uttermost.

[c] *supplications be made.*] That any man should ever have understood this phrase as a charge given to Timothy to *compose a liturgy* for the use of the clergy and people of Ephesus, appeared very surprising to me, when I saw it quoted from one Erasmus Warren, by Mr. Pierce: (Vind. p. 411:) but that the great and good Bishop Bull should have given so unnatural a turn to the phrase, as I find he has done in his Posthumous Sermons, Vol. II. No. 13, p. 543, &c. was such an instance of weak attachment to party prejudices, as is almost ready to make me weep.

SECT. III.

1 Tim. II. 3.

our fellow-creatures. *For this* [*is*] *good and acceptable in the sight of our Saviour God*, who is the great Guardian of the rights of society, and never meant to encourage his ministers or people to violate or disturb it out of any pre-
4 tences of a religious nature: *Who* indeed *wills that all men should be saved*,[d] *and come to the acknowledgment of the truth* of his gospel, which they will be most likely to do, if they see the professors of it behaving in the manner I now recommend, and avoiding all occasions either
5 of public or private offence. Let us therefore accustom ourselves to take proper views, both of God and of mankind, *for* it is the grand fundamental principle of our religion, that [*there is*] *one God*, the Creator of all, the gracious Father of all his creatures, who is no respecter of persons, *and one Mediator between God and men*, even *the man Christ Jesus*,[e] who hath not undertaken to plead for this or that nation or party of men alone, but whose kind offices in the court of heaven, where he now dwells, extends in some degree to the whole human race, and who refuses not the blessings he has procured to any that with sincerity and humility cast themselves
6 upon him. Let us make his extensive grace familiar to our mind, and live and act as those who remember our relation to that Saviour, *who gave himself a ransom for all*, so that no nation, no rank, no condition of men are excluded from the benefit of his death; *to be attested in due time* to the most distant regions of the world, that they may be called to put in their claim for that pardon and salvation which he hath pur-

3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there *is* one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

[d] *Will have all men to be saved.*] It is far from being my design, in any of these notes, to enter deep into controversy, but I must confess I have never been satisfied with that interpretation which explains *all men* here, merely as signifying *some* of all sorts and ranks of men; since I fear it might also be said, on the principles of those who are fondest of this gloss, that he also *wills all men to be condemned*. On the other hand, if *many* are not *saved*, it is certain the words must be taken with some limitation, which the following clause, he wills their *coming to the knowledge of the truth*, must also prove. The meaning therefore seems to be, that God has made *sufficient* provision for the salvation of *all*, and that it is to be considered as the general declaration of his will, that *all* who know the truth themselves, should publish it to all around them, so far as their influence can extend.

[e] *The man Christ Jesus.*] Though the union of the *Divine* nature with the *human*, qualified Christ for the office of Mediator, yet I think this plainly shews, that it is in his *human* nature we are to consider him as discharging it.

chased by his blood for all those who should believe in him. SECT. III.

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

This is the declaration of that glorious gospel, *of which I was appointed an herald*, to proclaim the grace of it all abroad, *and* was sent forth as *an apostle*, to attest that great and essential doctrine of it, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. *(I speak the truth in Christ*[f], as thou Timothy well knowest. *I lie not* in pretending to such an extraordinary mission,) and I was not only in general ordained to this ministry, but by peculiar destination was appointed to be *a teacher of the Gentiles in* this holy *faith, and* in the whole system of *truth* which it comprehends. 1 Tim. II. 7.

8 I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting:

8 *I therefore* give it in charge to them, and to thee, with that authority which it becomes one who is so expressly called to this high office; and I *will* in particular, *that*, as prayer is so important a duty, *men pray in every place*, that over all the world, and not only in the temple or synagogues of the Jews it be performed; in public assemblies, in families, and in secret retirements. And let them not only be taught in the general to perform it, but instructed as to the particular manner of doing it, that they may still be *holding up holy hands*[g], undefiled with any pollution of cruelty, sensuality, or unrighteous gain. Let it also be performed *without wrath*, with the most placid and composed mind, the most mild and benevolent affection, *and* without *doubting*[h], too, with a lively faith in

[f] *I speak the truth in Christ.*] Paul uses such solemnity in asserting this doctrine, as the Jews were so much averse to it, and were ready to charge his preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, either upon the want of a due regard to his own nation, or some view of avarice or ambition; looking on the Gentiles as most detestable creatures, and probably growing more inveterate against them, in proportion to the degree in which they were compelled to permit them to dwell in their own holy land, and often to associate themselves with them.

[g] *Lifting up holy hands.*] The expression of *holy hands* may allude to the custom of *washing their hands* before solemn prayer, which has prevailed not only among the Jews, but among heathens and Mahometans, that they might, hereby express their desire of inward *purity*. And the caution against *wrath* might be more suitable, as the many injuries which the Christians received from their persecutors might tempt them to some imprecations against them, not agreeable to the gentle and benign genius of their religion. And would to God this might always be considered, that they who are to lead the devotions of others in free prayer, may not mingle their own angry and irregular passions with their addresses; than which, I assuredly believe, scarce any thing can be more displeasing to God, more reproachful to Christian assemblies, or more scandalously offensive to persons of a right temper and disposition.

[h] *Without doubting.*] Some would render χωρις διαλογισμου, *without debating*, or disputing: but I think the more com-

SECT. III.

the power and wisdom, the goodness and faithfulness of God, and a cheerful dependence on all those gracious promises by which he encourages our addresses.

1 Tim. II. 8.

9 *In like manner*[i] [*I would charge*] the *women also*, who are to be considered as comprehended in the former precepts, that they be particularly careful *to adorn themselves*[k] only *with decent apparel, with modesty and sobriety*, neither exceeding in the article of unnecessary and inconvenient expence, nor in the least degree intrenching on the strictest decorum. I have many reasons, both relating to themselves and others, to wish that they may *not* place their ornament

1 so much *in plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or*

10 rich and *costly garments*; *But in what* is itself infinitely more valuable, and much better *becomes women professing godliness* and the gospel of Christ as the great rule of it, *in good works*; which will render them amiable in the eyes of God himself, and of all wise and virtuous persons with whom they converse.

11 They will no doubt be diligent in frequenting the public worship of God in your assemblies. And *let the women* there *learn in silence, with all* becoming *submission* to those who associate, and with the regard due to such a con-

12 gregation. *But I permit not a woman to teach* publicly, *nor to usurp authority over the man*, which she might seem to do, by officiating un-

13 der the character of a preacher. *But*, on the contrary, I charge her *to be in silence* at such a time. And indeed this is agreeable to what was intimated at the beginning of the world, and which passed in the earliest scenes of it. *For Adam was formed* the *first*[l] of the human species, from the dust of the earth, being

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

mon interpretation preferable, as it suggests another very important thought, that is, the necessity of faith in prayer, according to the account given of it in the paraphrase.

[i] *In like manner.*] Some explain this, as referring to what was to be attended to in *their* [illegible]; but I think it evident that it refers to the charge the apostle had given to Timothy with such solemnity, in the beginning of the preceding sentence.

[k] *To adorn themselves, &c.*] Estius very justly observes, that this discourse concludes with yet stronger force against foppery in men.

[l] *Adam was formed the first.*] It is plain the apostle does not mean to put the whole of his argument upon the *priority* of the man's creation, in point of time, for on that principle the birds and beasts would have the pre-eminence even to Adam. But he refers only to the human species, and to the regard which God expressed for the ease and comfort of man,

under God, its acknowledged lord and proprietor, and *then* no suitable companion being found for him, among all the creatures which came to pay him their homage, *Eve* was produced, from a rib taken out of his side, and presented as one whom God intended for a partner and helper to him. (Gen. ii. 18—22.) SECT. III. 1 Tim. II. 13.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

And it is farther to be recollected, that at the fatal entrance of sin into the world, *Adam was not* immediately *deceived*,[m] by the fraud of the serpent, *but* that artful seducer chose to begin his attack on *the woman*, who *being deceived* by him, *was* first *in the transgression*, and prevailed upon Adam by her solicitations, to offend. Now it should be an humbling consideration to all her daughters, that their sex was so greatly interested in the introduction of guilt and misery, and make them less forward in attempting to be guides to others, after such a miscarriage. *Yet* let them not be despised or upbraided on this account, considering on the other side, that *she* was also happily instrumental in producing the great promised Seed, (Gen iii. 15.) who was derived from a woman without any human father; and so they *shall be saved*, as I may say, *by child-birth*,[n] if there be a suitable readiness, 14

15 Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in child-bearing, 15

by making the woman to be his companion and assistant. So that it is the same thought in fewer words, which is expressed more largely, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. *The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man*, and thus I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase.

[m] *Adam was not* immediately *deceived.*] Diodate observes here, that the sacred history does not say that the man was deceived at all, thereby perhaps intimating his apprehension, as Milton long afterward represented it, that Adam out of an excessive tenderness for his wife, offended against his better knowledge, at her persuasion, without expecting such effects from the *forbidden fruit* as she did. But certainly this is making the matter much worse on the *man's* side than on the *woman's*. I rather think the apostle hereby intimates, that the tempter chose to make his first attack on the woman, as in her original and most glorious state the inferior, and consequently less fit in future life to take the lead in important affairs. As it seems in the general reasonable to suppose, that much the same proportion of understanding may be observed in the respective sexes, and though there may be some excepted cases, yet that they are not so many as to affect the main force of the argument.

[n] *Child-birth.*] I have taken what on attentive deliberation seemed the most probable sense of this much controverted and very obscure scripture; and it is that in which the learned and judicious Dr. William Harris acquiesces. (Har. on Mess. p. 54.) Mr. Locke (on Rom. vii. 5.) understands it, of being *carried safely through child-bearing*, as the like expression σωθησεται δια τεκνογονιας seems to signify, 1 Cor. iii. 15. (see the note there,) which sense Dr. Whitby endeavours to illustrate at large; not indeed as an absolute promise, which fact shews it is not; but as a general intimation, that pious women might cheerfully commit themselves to God, in the hour of nature's distress, if they trusted in God, maintaining

SECT. III.

not only to profess, but to obey the gospel; and *if they continue* constant *in* the exercise of *faith, and love, and holiness, with* that *sobriety* of temper and conduct which I have been now recommending, and which both religion and prudence concur to recommend to all, and to that sex in particular.

1 Tim. II. 15.

if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. i. 19.

MAY every Christian learn by these apostolical dictates to retain faith and a good conscience, and be very solicitous that no exactness in the former be thought sufficient to compensate for a defect in the latter. Soon will that faith itself suffer shipwreck, where a good conscience sits not at the helm; or rather soon will it serve only as a talent of gold, to a man sinking in the sea, to plunge him so much the deeper. It will be a part of the character of one who desires to preserve a good conscience,

Chap. ii. 1.

to maintain a benevolence of heart towards the whole human race, and to breathe out that benevolence in prayer which at the same

2 time expresses and increases it. And while all men have a share in it, kings and princes, in whose behaviour and temper the happiness of so many thousands are concerned, have a peculiar claim to our devout remembrance. Above all, let us pray for our own, that they may continue, as blessed be God his present majesty hath long been,* and we have reason to hope his successors will be, the ministers of God for good. May our life, under such a government, be in one sense as well as another, quiet and peaceable, and may it be conducted in all godliness and honesty. Thus

4 shall we do our part to subserve that gracious will of God, to effect which he hath done all that it was proper for him to do, that all men may be saved, as our walking in the truth may bring many to the knowledge of it. May that knowledge prevail more and more in the world, that the *one God* may be universally adored, through the *one Mediator between God and man, the*

ity withal, persevering in chastity, and strictly adhering to the laws of temperance in every other respect. Mr. Pyle, from 1 Tim. iv. 3, v. 10—14, concludes, that the apostle refers to some of those false teachers that condemned marriage as unlawful, or at least comparatively unclean. But I can by no means acquiesce in either of these senses; nor suppose, as some others have done, that τεκνογονια signifies the *education of children*: though I am very sensible, a due care in that respect is one of the most important duties and services which can be imagined to come within the verge of female life.

* The *author* had the happiness to write this in the *twenty-fourth year* of King George II. that father of his people, *by whom we enjoy great quietness, and by whose providence very worthy deeds are done unto this nation, which we should accept always, and in all places, with all thankfulness.*

man Christ Jesus, in whom deity dwells, and whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we worship, as exalted above all adoration and praise. SECT. III. Verse 7

This only-begotten Son of God became a man, that he might give himself a ransom for us, a ransom for all who should believe in him. Blessed be God, that we have received this important testimony, received it from Paul the apostle, received it from that faithful herald of such astonishing grace, who was divinely appointed to be a teacher of the Gentiles, and who to this day is teaching us by his writings, and in every section of them giving us lessons of infinite importance.

May we learn, from what he teaches here, not only the object 8
to whom our prayers are to be directed, and the persons for whom they are to be offered, but likewise the temper from which they are to proceed. May our *hands be holy*, and our hearts overflowing with *love*, and firmly established in *faith* unfeigned, resting on the promises we plead, and rejoicing in an assured hope, that the *eternal* JEHOVAH, who so long since styled himself *the hearer of prayer*, (Psal. lxv. 2,) will not now say to any humble and upright souls, *Seek ye me in vain*. In all our conduct, let us remember we are in his presence, and let a concern to please him, and to adorn our profession, run through every action of our lives. Let it direct our expences and our dress. Let it engage us to maintain a constant decorum in every cir- 9
cumstance, sacred or civil; to be in due subjection to our supe- 15
riors, and to continue in faith and love, in holiness and sobriety.

Let the sex, to whom the concluding instructions of this sec- 13
tion are peculiarly addressed, while they are humbled in the remembrance of that original offence, in which Eve, our first mother so unhappily led the way, rejoice in the great victory of the seed of the woman over the serpent. And let the other sex, on 15
which this was bestowed as a gift of so great value, that God judged it necessary to complete the felicity of paradise in its untainted bloom, never manifest the odious effects of the fall, by ungenerously upbraiding the daughters for the mother's fault, at the distance of so many generations; but rather rejoice, that, as by woman came transgression, so by her came redemption too. And let us all join in improving so invaluable a favour, and en- 14
deavouring to express our gratitude for it, by acting aright, according to the several relations which we sustain in life.

SECT. IV.

The apostle instructs Timothy in the qualifications to be attended to in those who were to be set apart to the office of a pastor, and deacon in the church. 1 Tim. III. 1—13

1 TIMOTHY III. 1.

SECT. IV. 1 Tim. III. 1

IT [*is*] *a faithful saying*, most certain in itself, and worthy of being always acknowledged and attended to, that, *if any one earnestly desireth the episcopal* or pastoral *office, he desireth a good work.* To feed the church of Christ, and to take the oversight of it, is indeed a very laborious employment; but it is also very honourable, and greatly tends to advance the glory of God, and to promote the good of mankind, if 2 it be discharged in a proper manner. *A bishop therefore*, or an overseer of the flock of Christ, *must be blameless* in every respect, with regard to his moral character, since any thing which may be amiss in him will tend to bring a reproach upon his office, and greatly to obstruct his usefulness. It is particularly requisite that if he be a married man, he should be *the husband of* only *one wife;*[a] for if he have more than one at a time, or have divorced a former without sufficient excuse, and taken another during her life, it is an irregularity by no means to be countenanced in a person from whom it is natural to expect such exemplary purity of manners. It is also necessary that he be *watchful*, and not one of a slothful and indolent temper, who would sleep over so high and sacred a

1 TIM. III. 1.

THIS *is* a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, so-

[a] *The husband of one wife.*] Mr Hallet and Mr. Whiston both infer from hence, that *second marriages* are unlawful to the *clergy*; and the Muscovites suppose that one wife is so necessary, that no man can become a bishop till he be married, nor continue to exercise that office longer than his wife lives. Pery's Russia, p. 230. But circumstances may be so adjusted, that there may be as much reason for a second marriage as for the first, and as little inconvenience of any kind may attend it. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems to me most reasonable to believe, that (as there is no express precept in the Bible, requiring a man who had several wives at the time of his embracing Christianity, to divorce or dismiss all but one,) the Divine wisdom might judge that it was a proper medium, between encouraging polygamy, and too great a rigour in condemning it, to fix such a brand of infamy on this irregular practice, by prohibiting any man, let his character be ever so extraordinary, to undertake the ministry, while he had more than one wife, and to discourage it in those already converted by such passages as Mat. xix. 9, and 1 Cor. vii. 2

ber, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

charge; that he be *prudent* and steady in his behaviour, regular and *decent*, guarding against those little indecorums which expose men to contempt, even where there is nothing grossly vicious in their conduct. And it is particularly desirable, that he be *given to hospitality*;[b] as Christians, who travel from one place to another, will naturally go to the minister's house, if they are strangers in the place, and expect, on account of their common profession, to be received there. He must also be a person of such natural abilities, and so instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, as that he should be *fit to teach*[c] publicly, as well as to preside in other respects. *Not one that sitteth long over* 3

1 Tim. III. 2

3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

wine, or any other kind of strong liquor, or that has so little government of himself, as to be *ready to strike* those that displease him. He must *not* be *attached to* any method of *sordid* and dishonourable *gain*,[d] *but* must be *moderate* in all his desires and passions, *not given to contention, not a lover of money*, so as to take a pleasure in hoarding it up, even if it be justly and properly his own. It is also evidently desir- 4

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection, with all gravity;

able, that he should be *one who presides well over his own house, having his children*, if he be a father, *in subjection with all gravity*, that their follies may not bring a reproach upon the family, and by consequence in some measure upon

[b] *Given to hospitality.*] Let it be observed once for all, that as there were then in eastern countries few houses of public entertainment, *hospitality* was a virtue more peculiarly seasonable and necessary than among us; I mean so far as it related to the accommodation of entire strangers on their travels.

[c] *Apt to teach.*] The bishop of Winchester lays some stress on our not meeting with any directions relating to *ordination* in this enumeration of the offices of a bishop, or presbyter; (for so candid and judicious a writer could not but acknowledge they are here words of the same signification.) But it is strange he should not have observed, that nothing is here said of *administering the sacrament*, which concur with many other circumstances to shew how far the apostle was from intending a full representation of *all* the pastural duties. And it may be added, that the directions he afterwards gives to Timothy, on the head of *ordination*, may suggest instruction in this respect to all ministers. And it must be submitted to consideration, whether the omission of any charge to Presbyters, enjoining them to obey their bishop as a person of superior authority, does not weigh much more one way, than the omission pleaded above can avail the other. See Hoadly of Episcop. p. 390.

[d] *Attached to sordid gain.*] It is remarkable that this phrase is seldom or never used in the New Testament to express *any gain*, but that which is made or procured by the *exchanges of Christian ministers*; and never surely does an eagerness or greediness in pursuit of money appear more dishonourable and sordid than in persons of that noble, but alas! too often prostituted profession.

SECT. IV.

himself; *For if any one cannot preside over his own house*, in such a manner as to preserve a due decorum in his family, where he has such a natural authority, *how shall he* be able to *take care of the church of God*,[e] where there will be such a diversity of persons and tempers, over which it will be impossible for him to maintain an equal inspection and influence? A bishop also should *not* be *one newly converted* to Christianity, *lest*, not having had a sufficient acquaintance with its principles, nor establishment in the duties it teaches, *he should be lifted up with pride*, in consequence of his distinguished character, and arrogate to himself an authority and dominion which God never intended for him. [*And*] should this be the case, *he* might easily *fall into the condemnation of the devil*, who was intoxicated with self-conceit, and so rose up into mad rebellion against God, that he might obtain that greater exaltation to which he imagined his own excellency gave him a claim.[f] *It is necessary also*, in order to a pastor's filling up this important office with a becoming dignity, *that he have a good report of those that are without, lest he* should otherwise *fall into reproach, and* in consequence of that be taken in *the snare of the devil*,[g] who will easily

1 Tim. III. 5.

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how should he take care of the church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil.

[e] *He that presides well over his own house*, &c.] Exactly parallel to this is a wise saying of Confucius, when directing princes to take care of their families; "It is impossible that he who knows not how to govern and reform his own family, should rightly govern and reform a people." Conf. Mor. p. 38.

[f] *The condemnation of the devil.*] Many have imagined that the first instance of Satan's pride was an affectation of *equality with God*, but others have thought that improbable, and have concluded it was the breach of some positive law, either relating to the manner in which God required to be worshipped, or the order and station of the angelic squadrons, or refusing some appointed ministry to some lower world, or rejecting the dominion of God's incarnate Son, who might in general be revealed as the future Head of angels as well as men. This last is the scheme which Milton prefers, and it is insisted upon at large in Reyn. Quer. of the Ang. World. Q. xvi. p. 13—28. But though it is certain the crime was *pride*, our conjectures may never be able to determine what was the particular instance; nor is the inquiry by any means necessary.

[g] *Snare of the devil.*] Some have explained the word Διαβολου, of some human *slanderer*, but it seems to me much more natural to understand it in the sense it has just above, where I think it must signify, our great *infernal enemy*. And it is easy to see, that Satan might graft many dangerous temptations on the evil report which a man might have incurred by any scandal, before he entered on the ministry; either attempting to draw him to the repetition of former evils, from an apprehension, that he had very little reputation to lose by a new fall, or weakening his hands in efforts of usefulness, by a fear, that the remembrance of those past irregularities would render his attempts less effectual. Thoughts worthy the consideration of all who design themselves for

SECT. IV.

know how to graft temptations upon that circumstance, to draw him aside one way or another, from that strictness and correctness of behaviour which suits his distinguished station.

1 Tim. III. 7.

8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be grave*, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, nor greedy of filthy lucre,

This may suffice concerning the principal order of ministers in the church of Christ, bishops, pastors, or elders. *In like manner* [*let*] me now say something relating to *the* other order, I mean that of *deacons*, who are more immediately appointed to serve tables, and especially to take care of the poor. (Acts vi. 2.) Concerning these I would observe, that it is of importance, that they likewise [*be*] *grave* in their deportment, that they may avoid that contempt which the excesses of levity are ready to produce. They should *not* by any means be *double-tongued*, deceitful, or inconstant in their words, as they may chance to come into different companies; *nor addicted to much wine*, which will render them utterly unfit for their office; *nor greedy of dishonourable gain*, which may tempt them to violate their engagements to the church, and appropriate its stock lodged in their hands to private uses, rather than those charitable purposes for which it was collected. In one word, let them be persons well instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, and *retaining the* sublime and long concealed *mystery of* our holy *faith*, not merely as a point of speculation, but practice; and let it ever be held *in a pure* and undefiled *conscience*, and those only chosen into this office who seem conscientious men in the judgment of charity. *And let even these be first proved* and tried for a while, and *then*, *if they be* upon trial *found* to be *blameless*, *let them use the office of a deacon.*

8

9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

9

10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless.

10

In like manner [*let*] *the wives* of the deacons, and therefore much more of the bishops, [*be*] *grave* and sober in their deportment, *not* according to the example of the great enemy, that malignant spirit, who has his very name from thence, *false accusers* of the brethren and others. Let them also be *watchful* for occasions of doing

11 Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober,

11

the ministry, and especially to be recollected, when persons, who have been remarkably profligate, are desirous of undertaking it, or returning to it.

SECT. IV. good, and guard against every temptation to evil, and let them be *faithful in all things* which are committed to their care, lest their imprudent and unfaithful conduct should bring the character of their husbands under suspicion.

faithful in all things.

1 Tim. III. 11.

12 *Let the deacons*, as well as the bishops, *be the husbands of* only *one wife*, and let them be men of prudence and resolution, *governing their children and* other members of *their own houses well*; that no irregularity at home may disgrace the society they belong to.

12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

13 It is necessary to be thus cautious, though their ministry be but of an inferior rank, *for they who have discharged the office of a deacon well, procure to themselves* not only a fair report in the general, but very often *a good degree*[b] of farther advancement in a higher office; *and* they lay a foundation for *great boldness in* professing *the faith which is in Christ Jesus*. Their acquaintance with the affairs of the church will render them more capable of defending it, than many others can. And the honourable testimony borne to their character, by advancing them to this trust, and continuing them in it, will also embolden them to plead more freely, and engage the more respectful attention.

13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE teachers of others, and those who preside in the highest offices which Christ has founded in his church, may learn from this passage their duty as well as their dignity and honour. Let them remember, the work they have desired and engaged in is a good work. Let them think and speak, not arrogantly, and tyrannically, but respectfully and solemnly of their office, and let them cultivate all these excellent qualities, which may fit them to discharge it aright; sobriety and vigilance, gravity and hospitality, the strictest temperance, the most diffusive benevolence.

2, 3 Let them rise far above those low views which are to worldly minded ministers the occasion of so many scandalous contentions, which so often establish a separate interest, and produce a secret and mutual aversion between them and their people.

[b] *A good degree.*] As a learned education was not in this age of extraordinary gifts, so necessary in the superior officers of the church, as it has since been; and as it is highly probable deacons might frequently officiate as occasional teachers in public assemblies: it might be matter of prudence, to choose their elders or pastors out of the deacons, to which the apostle here evidently refers.

Let the churches of Christ attend to this charge, to direct them in the choice of their pastors; and let ministers of standing and reputation, under whose guidance the matter may in part fall, be very careful that they do not encourage any to undertake the work who are deficient in these things: things of such importance, that it is certain no genius and learning can make up for the want of them. If *deacons*, in their inferior station, are to be free from such stains, and to be remarkable for such virtues, as are here described, how much more should the pastors themselves be so, to whom the inspection of the deacons is also committed? SECT. IV. Ver. 12, 13

Let the *ministers of Christ* therefore study to excel in them more and more. And let such as are but lately entered on their work, though not novices in the language of the apostle, yet be on their guard, lest they be *lifted up with pride*, and so *fall into the condemnation of the devil.* But from this lurking and insinuating evil who is secure! Let all ministers learn to draw an occasion of exercising humility, from what might in another view seem a temptation to vanity, a survey of the dignity and excellency of their office. For how justly may this humble them, when they reflect on the many imperfections which attend their discharge of it. 6

To conclude, let all, who are in any degree distinguished in the church, be excited to a care of presiding in a proper manner over their own families: and since it is evident that the apostolic rule allows of marriage, and supposes that, by whatever doctrine of devils, it might be forbidden, it would generally be practised by the ministers of Christ, let them however take care to make choice of companions in conjugal life, who may adorn and bless the houses to which they belong, and lessen, rather than increase, the difficulties inseparable from their own station and office. 5, 15

SECT. V.

Though he hoped quickly to have an interview with Timothy, the apostle recommends the care of the church to him; in which view he raises his idea of the charge he received, and represents the difficulties attending the faithful execution of it, in consequence of those pernicious doctrines which false teachers would endeavour to introduce. 1 Tim. III. 14—*to the end.* Chap. IV. 1—5.

1 TIM. III. 14. THESE things write

THESE things which thou hast now been reading concerning the character of persons who are to be intrusted with the office of bi-

SECT. V.

shops and deacons, *I write to thee, hoping to come to thee shortly*[a]. *But if I delay*, I give thee these instructions, *that thou mayest know how it becomes thee to converse in the house of God*, in which thou hast the honour to bear so high an office; even in that house, *which is the church of the living God*. But I will not inculcate the matter farther, contenting myself with reminding thee, that *the* very *pillar and ground of* the whole system of gospel-*truth*[b], upon which the support of the entire edifice depends, *And* which is *confessedly great*, beyond all controversy and contradiction, *is the mystery of godliness*, that wonderful and sublime doctrine, which it is our great business to assert and enforce, and which has so evident a tendency to promote true godliness in all its branches: *God was manifested in the flesh* of our blessed Redeemer, in whose human nature the incarnate Deity dwelt; and thus he was *justified in* and by *the Spirit*, whose extraordinary communication, in the midst of all the meanness of human nature in its suffering state, vindicated his high claim, and marked him out, in the most illustrious manner, for the Divine Person he professed himself to be. He was *seen of angels*, and gazed at by them in various circumstances of his life and death, as a most astonishing and instructive spectacle. He was *preached among the Gentiles*, who were invited to embrace his religion, upon assurance of

1 Tim. III. 15.

16

I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

16 And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the

[a] *Hoping to come to thee shortly.*] It seems evident from hence, that Paul intended to have come back to Timothy at Ephesus in a little time, but was providentially called another way; but it can by no means be concluded from hence (as has been shown in the introduction), that Paul wrote this epistle to Timothy after his imprisonment at Rome.

[b] *The pillar and ground of truth.*] Though it is, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, very true, that this title is sometimes given by the rabbies to the members of the great *sanhedrim*, at least when assembled together, yet no interpretation of this text seems more precarious than that which refers it to the *church*. That had just before been called a *house*, and therefore cannot naturally be called a *pillar*, or *foundation*. Yet if it were to be granted, it would only prove, that the church was to support Christianity from age to age (which it has certainly done,) not that any particular church is infallible. But it is well known, that many good critics refer this descriptive clause to Timothy, agreeably to that figure by which Peter is called a *pillar*, Gal. ii. 9. Compare Rev. iii. 12. But, I think, had this been the construction, the accusative case would have been used to agree with or understood. I therefore choose to end the sentence with the word ζωντος, and begin the next with στυλος, as in the version and paraphrase; and then the whole system of evangelical truth is considered as resting on this *pillar* and *basis*, as ἑδραιωμα may signify.

Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

being received to equal privileges with the Jews. He was also *believed on in the world*, many of the most distant nations already coming in to the Christian profession, and pressing for a share in the benefit of it. And at length, when his ministry on earth was completed, he was *received up into glory*, and seated on a throne in the heavens, where he presides over all things for the good of his church, and answers nobler purposes with regard to it, than his corporeal presence here could have done.

SECT. V.

1 Tim. III. 16.

IV. 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

IV. These great doctrines of our holy faith are worthy of being recollected by every Christian, and of being insisted upon by every minister. *But the Spirit* of Divine inspiration, in the scriptures of truth,[e] and in evangelical prophets, particularly in me, *expressly saith* and testifies, *that in the last times*,[a] in ages yet to come, *some*, who are under the dispensation of the gospel, and make great pretences to zeal in its interests, *shall apostatize from* the purity of *the* original *faith; giving heed to deceitful spirits*, who shall endeavour to impose upon them by false, though specious appearances, *and* to various *doctrines of demons*,[e] and particularly such doctrines relating to the spirits of dead men, as the devil, the great author and abettor of lies, shall suggest to them for the most pernicious purposes. For they will come to be worshippers of dead idols, and departed spirits; as in Israel also they worshipped them; *through the hypocrisy of* the most abandoned and shameless *liars*,[f] spreading their errors under pretence of sanctity; *whose own*

IV. 1.

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having

[e] *In the scriptures of truth, &c.*] I have paraphrased this clause in its greatest extent, because, as there are some passages in the Old Testament which have been supposed, though I think not very expressly, to look this way, it is highly probable that others, who had the gift of prophecy, (as we are sure many at that time had) might predict so memorable and important an event, as Paul certainly had done before. See 2 Thess. ii. 1, &c. But the inspiration of the New Testament in general, rests upon much stronger evidence than what arises from this clause.

[a] *In the last times.*] Though it is certain, that (as Dr. Whitby here proves at large,) the phrase of the *last days* does often signify the concluding period of the Jewish church, and the first age of Christianity; yet I cannot perceive, that it is so confined to this, but that the whole period, or time under the reign of the Messiah, may be spoke of in this language.

[e] *Doctrines of demons.*] Archbishop Tillotson follows Mr. Joseph Mede in explaining this, as expressing *worshipping to* the spirits of *the dead*. Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 53. But, though this be undoubtedly one branch of that diabolical doctrine which the church of Rome hath followed, I see no sufficient reason for limiting the phrase to that detestable tenet.

[f] *Through the hypocrisy of liars, &c.*] A very ingenious critic (many of whose

SECT. V.

conscience is so *seared* and cauterised, that they feel no manner of remorse for the grossest frauds, by which they impose on the weak and credulous with impious pretences to a Divine revelation. They will indeed endeavour to gain the good opinion of men, as persons of extraordinary sanctity and mortification; in this view *requiring*, especially from the ministers of Christ, *abstinence from marriage*,[5] as if it were an impure state, [*and*] less pleasing to God than that of celibacy. They will also urge men *to refrain from* various kinds of *meats*, *which God*, the bountiful Former of all things, *hath created* for our nourishment and entertainment, *to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by those who know the truth*, and so are instructed to place religion, not in such indifferent things as these, but in things more truly excellent and worthy of God. *For* whatever these deceivers may suggest, and however they may represent the matter, *every creature of God* [*is*] *good, and nothing* [*is*] *to be rejected* under a colour of scrupling the lawfulness of it, [*provided it be*] *received with thanksgiving*; *For it is* in that case *sanctified by the word of God*, which allows the use, *and* by *prayer*, which draws down a blessing upon it. And

1 Tim. III. 2.

their consciences seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry; *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer.

remarks on scripture deserve attention,) has urged the authority of Epiphanius, for inserting into the former part of this verse the following words, as spoken by the apostle, Εασουσι γας τινες λαλησουσι; ως και ο τα Ισραηλ εσπασθησαν. Epiph. Haer. 78. p. 1055. Ed. Col. But the credit of *one copy* cannot be so considerable, as to warrant such an *addition* to the sacred text, especially considering how *late* that citation was made, and how absolutely impossible it would have been, after the time of Epiphanius, to have corrected all the copies, by erazing from them these words, of which no trace is any where else to be found. I rather think that this father, very far, to be sure, from being a correct writer, has confounded two quotations together, and in these words referred to 1 Cor. x. 7, illustrated by Psal. cvi. 28, of which he had an imperfect remembrance; or that by φησι, (with which the passage is introduced) we are to understand "*he means*," and then it will be only the gloss of Epiphanius. In this sense Mr. Mede took it, in his discourse on the apostacy of the latter times. Yet, as this seems a remarkable comment of so ancient a writer, I was willing to insert it in my paraphrase, though I could not mark it as any part of the text. The construction of the original in these two verses, προσεχοντες πνευμασι πλανοις διδασκαλιαις δαιμονιων, makes it necessary to vary from our translation in the manner I have here done. See Crit. Not. on Scrip. p. 9—103.

5 *Abstinence from marriage and* various kinds of *meats.*] The original words, κωλυοντων γαμειν, απεχεσθαι βρωματων, contain, as Mr. Blackwall well observes, one of the boldest ellipses in the whole New Testament, where a word is to be understood, contrary to that which is before expressed. But he shews, that some of the most celebrated classical writers, and particularly Horace and Cicero, take the same liberty. Blackw. Sacr. Class. Vol. I. p. 72, 73.

when persons attend to the instructions of God's word, and maintain converse with him by prayer, seeking thereby in particular his blessing upon their food, they may indifferently use on any days all kinds of wholesome nourishment, not excepting those which were most strictly forbidden by the Mosaic law, for reasons peculiar to that dispensation, and therefore to expire when the authority of that law was to cease. SECT. V. 1 Tim. IV. 3.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT the Spirit of God expressly spake has been so expressly accomplished, as plainly to prove the Divine original of this oracle, and of all that are connected with it. The grand apostacy of the latter days is made manifest, the seducing spirits have effectually done their part, the world has given heed to them, and wandered after them; so that doctrines of devils have almost cast out from his own church the doctrine of Christ. No testimony of hypocritical liars hath been wanting to confirm the fraud to the utmost of their power, and the whole conduct of it seems to declare to how dreadful a degree it is possible for conscience to be seared. Marriage has been forbidden, while the pardon of fornication, adultery, and incest, have been rated at a certain price by that grand merchant of the souls of men, who hath ventured to call himself the vicar of Christ upon earth. By him men have been taught to place the greater part of religion in abstaining from meats, in attending unintelligible jargon, instead of the service of God's sanctuary, and in transforming the high solemnities of the simplest and most rational worship that ever was instituted, into a ceremonious farce. Adored be Divine Providence and grace, that any parts of the once dark domains of this man of sin have been awakened to assert the purity of the Christian faith and worship, and to seek to purge away the reproach and infamy which such adulterations had brought upon the name! Blessed be God that our attention is diverted from these trifles and monsters, these mysteries of folly, and mysteries of iniquity, to the great mystery of godliness! Let it be familiar to our thoughts. The manifestation of God in the flesh! A sight which the angels beheld with wonder, while the blessed Spirit sealed the authority of God's incarnate Son, and attested his gospel among the Gentiles, till the world was brought to believe in him; so that he looked down from the throne of glory, to which he was received, and saw his own oracle fulfilled, *If I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me*; (John xii. 32.) May this mysterious, yet resplendent truth be strenuously maintained, and practically preached, by all the ministers of the gospel; may

Chap. iv. 1.

Chap. iii. 16.

SECT. V. Chap. iv. 3, 4, 5.

they shew, in every other respect, that they know how to behave themselves aright in the house of the living God; and may many by these means be brought to believe and to know the truth in its vital energy. Then will the common enjoyments of life have an additional relish, being *received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

SECT. VI.

Paul gives many good advices to Timothy, to attend to the great essentials of religion, patiently to endure all afflictions, to behave with the most exact decorum and exemplary care, and study to improve the gifts with which God had honoured him for the edification of the church and the salvation of souls. 1 Tim. IV. 6,—*to the end.*

1 TIMOTHY IV. 6.

SECT. VI. 1 Tim. IV. 6.

IF thou shalt be careful frequently to *suggest these* great and weighty *things*,[a] of which I have now been writing *to the brethren* who are committed to thy charge, and to remind them of their importance with becoming zeal and affection, *thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ*, and shalt act as may be expected from one who has been *nourished up* from his very childhood *in the words of faith and of good doctrine, which thou hast accurately traced out*, and followed
7 with suitable diligence. *But* these *profane and old wives' fables*,[b] of which many of the Jewish allegorical and traditionary teachers are so fond, do thou *reject*, as things altogether unworthy of thy regard, *and* rather take care strenuously to *exercise thyself* in those doctrines and practices which have the most immediate tendency *to* promote real *godliness*. *For* that *bodily exercise*
8 about which many are so solicitous, and in the pursuit of which they go through so many fatigues, in preparing for, and attending the public games, *is profitable to* but very *little*,[c] the

1 TIM. IV. 6.

IF thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

7 But refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

8 For bodily exercise profiteth little;

[a] *Suggest.*] Raphelius on the place justly observes, that this is the exact signification of the word ὑποτιθέμενος. For the import of παρηκολουθηκας, see on Luke i. 3.

[b] *Old wives fables.*] This undoubtedly signifies *Jewish traditions.* Compare chap. i. 4, 6; Tit. i. 14. If they were such as those with which the rabbinical writers, so far as I have had an opportunity of judging of them, abound, nothing ever better deserved the name, they being not only the most *incredible*, but the most insipid and *senseless tales* any where to be met with.

[c] *Bodily exercise is profitable to little.*] Γυμνασια. It seems much more reasonable, with Dr. Whitby and Dr. Edwards (on Script. Vol. II. p. 167, 168.) to refer this to the celebrated exercises at the Gre-

SECT. VI.

1 Tim. IV. 8.

but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

best rewards of it being of a very transient and fading nature, *but* true, substantial, practical *godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise* both *of the present and future life*;[d] naturally tending to promote our real happiness in this world, and being surely and alone effectual to secure the blessedness of the next. *This* [*is*]

9 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

9 *a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance*; receive it therefore, and retain it carefully, and inculcate it upon those who are committed to thy charge, or whom thou mayest be concerned in setting apart for the ministry. *For* the advancement of *this* godliness is the *end* of all the hardships *we* encounter; while we *both* pass through the most fatiguing *labour, and suffer* the sharpest *reproach*, and the most violent outrage, *because we have hoped*, and continue to hope, *in the* protection and favour of the *living God, who is the Saviour* and Preserver *of all men*,[e] by his gracious providence, and *especially of the faithful* souls who cordially believe and sincerely obey the gospel; for whom he reserves the most invaluable blessings of a future state, and whom he will guide safely to it, through all the dangers of this. *These*, my dear Timothy, are *things* of the greatest importance,[f] and there-

10 For therefore we both labour, and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

10

11 These things

11

cian games, (of which Dr. West has given so entertaining and useful an account in the Dissertation prefixed to his Pindar,) than to those severities of the Jewish Essenes which some other commentators mention. These strenuous exercises might promote strength and courage, they would naturally raise high emulation, and the victors received great honours, and sometimes valuable immunities and privileges. Perhaps, indeed, some of these might hardly balance personal injuries they might meet with in them; and many had suffered much who received no reward at all. But the apostle stands not on this: he plainly intimates, that where men succeed best, the greatest advantages they received by their victory, all fell infinitely short of those which true religion secures.

[d] *Promise of the present and future life.*] *Godliness*, under the New Testament dispensation, has no particular promise of *health*, or *reputation*, or *wealth*, or any other individual blessing, though in its natural consequences it wears a most friendly aspect upon *all*, but it has the promise of *comfort* and *happiness* in general; and that declaration of Christ, that the good man shall *receive an hundred fold*, even *in the midst of persecution*, if that should be his lot, (Mark x. 30.) might alone be sufficient to vindicate the apostle in this assertion. I have often wondered, that so great a man, as the present Bishop of London, should suppose a reference here to the covenant with Noah, by which he supposes the original fertility of the earth was restored after the deluge; since there are so many other temporal promises made to the righteous; and the benefit of this is common both to good and bad men, admitting his lordship's hypothesis as to the sense of it. See Dr. Sherl on Proph. p. 111.

[e] *Saviour of all men.*] This seems a title parallel to that in Job vii. 20: *Preserver of men*: but he is especially the *Saviour of believers*, as he extends to them the noblest and most important deliverance.

[f] *These* are *things* of the greatest importance.] The following expression, of

SECT. VI.

fore *give* them solemnly *in charge, and teach* them to all, as thou hast opportunity.

command and teach.

1 Tim. IV. 12. And, that thou mayest inculcate them with the greater efficacy, *let* it be thy care to behave in such a manner, that *no man* may be able to *despise thy youth; but*, on the contrary, let thy whole behaviour command a reverence to it, while others see that, young as thou art in years, thou art old in wisdom, piety, and universal goodness. *Be thou* therefore *an example to* all *the faithful in* prudent and useful *speech, in* a grave, steady, and consistent *conversation, in* unbounded *love*, and *in* a candid yet zealous *spirit*,[g] *in* uniform and incorruptible *fidelity*, and *in* unspotted *purity*, by which all suspicion of evil shall be avoided, and even all occasion of apo-

12 Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 logy superseded. And *till I come* back to Ephesus, to take thee along with me, if Providence favour my purpose of returning, or if not, till I may have an interview with thee elsewhere, make the best improvement of thy time, as considering the greatness of thy work, and the various furniture which it requires. In this view, *attend to reading* the scriptures and other useful writings, and *to* the important care of *exhortation*, and *to*

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 *teaching* both in public and private. *Neglect not*, by proper and strennous exercise, to rouse and cultivate *that gift* of God's Holy Spirit *which is in thee, which was given thee* in a large and sensible effusion on that ever-memorable day when thou wert set apart to thy sacred office *by* the ministration of those who had the gift of *prophecy*, by which they were enabled and excited to foretel something extraordinary concerning thee. *With* such a token of his special presence did God honour *the imposition of the hands of the* whole *presbytery*,[h] who concurred with me in

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

giving them in charge, shews that these words refer not merely to what was mentioned in the former clause, but to the whole preceding discourse.

[g] *In spirit.*] Some explain this of an industrious improvement of the *gifts* of the *Holy Spirit*, and have urged it as a proof, that Timothy was possessed of such extraordinary endowments of this kind, as raised him far above the rank of an ordinary minister. That he had miraculous gifts is certain, compare ver. 14; but the proof of it from these words, which admit another sense so naturally and fairly, must be very precarious.

[h] *Gift—by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery.*] The presbyters seemed to have laid on their hands with Paul, when Timothy was solemnly set apart to the ministerial work; and, as the Spirit was often given by the imposition of the apostles hands alone (compare 2 Tim. i. 6,

1 Tim. IV. 15.

15 Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

recommending thee to his blessing by that solemn rite. *Meditate* therefore, *on these things*, which I have now been writing thee by way of direction and charge; *be always employed in* attending to *these things*, *that thy improvement in all* that can conduce to the honourable and faithful discharge of thine office, *may be* made *manifest* to all around thee. In a word, remember that thou art surrounded with numberless temptations, and that the trust committed to thee is a matter of infinite importance. *Take heed* therefore *to thyself*, to thine own temper and conduct; *and* take heed *to* [*thy*] *doctrine*, both with respect to the matter and manner of thy teaching, and *continue in them*, making this the whole of thy business and care. The fatigue indeed may be great, and many of the restraints to which thou mayest be subjected for the present, disagreeable, but the happy consequence will counterbalance all; *for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and thy hearers.*[1] It will be the means, not only of delivering thine own soul in the great day of account, but of improving thy happiness to unknown degrees; and though it is not in thy power to command success, yet thou hast great encouragement to hope, that God will so bless thy labours, as to make thee instrumental in delivering many souls from death, and raising them to complete and everlasting felicity.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

16

Acts viii. 17, 18,) we cannot suppose those of Paul would be less effectual in this circumstance. See Misc. Sacr. Vol. II. Ess. ii. p. 70. It is strange, that a man of Mr. Slater's good sense should have thought of interpreting presbytery here of the *whole college* of the *apostles*. There is no reason at all to believe that they were now together, or that any of them was with Paul, at *Timothy's ordination*; for there is no hint of its being performed at Jerusalem, where a *few*, though but a few, of them might perhaps reside at this time. See Orig. Draught, p. 184. As this text strongly implies, that Timothy was adorned with some supernatural gifts, so it also proves, that the degree in which such favours were continued, did very much depend on the diligence and fidelity with which they were cultivated, by the person who had received them.

[1] *Save thyself and thy hearers.*] I cannot forbear observing here, though it be not a critical remark, that the salvation of others may accidentally have some influence upon a man's own salvation; as the better those about him are, the more advantage he has for religious improvement, the fewer hindrances from duty, and temptations to sin. And the argument for imitation is much strengthened, when it comes from a person placed in an inferior station, from whom therefore less might be expected in that view than from ourselves. But certainly the thought chiefly referred to here, is the necessity of acting faithfully in the ministry, in order to being entitled to the Divine promise of salvation, in which persons who betray so important a trust can have no part.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VI. Ver. 6.

It is doubtless a very great advantage to Christians, and especially to the ministers of Christ, to have been *nourished*, and educated *in the words of faith and of good doctrine*; and they who are honoured with the great trust of training them up, should be particularly careful on this head, remembering that no other branches of learning are of comparable importance to any Christian, and much less to those whose business it must be to maintain the faith of Christ in the world, and to instruct others in his doctrine, both publicly and privately.

12 But to do this with success, and to command that reverence, which it is desirable for the public good they should command, whether they be younger or elder, it is necessary that they endeavour to be examples to other believers in their whole conversation and deportment, in word and in spirit, patterns of charity, faith, and purity. To qualify them more abundantly for such a work, whatever their gifts may be, whether of nature or of 14 grace, it will be necessary to stir them up by frequent exercise, 13 and to cultivate them by reading and meditation, as well as 15 prayer; that their stock may be increasing, *that their profiting may appear unto all*, and that they may lose no advantage they can secure, of rendering their exhortations and instructions worthy the regard of the wisest and best, as well as the least and weakest of those committed to their care.

But surely, whatever difficulties may lie in their way, and 10 whatever fatigues, or censures, or sufferings they may encoun- 16 ter while thus employed, the prospect of success may sweeten all. If they may *save themselves and those that hear them*, if they may *give up an account with joy*, if they may see souls recovered from the tyranny of sin and the kingdom of Satan now, and at length, after having anticipated the pleasures of heaven upon earth, raised to the full enjoyment of those pleasures above, they will bless the remembrance of their labours. Yea, the very consciousness of spending life in such pursuits must, to a generous and pious mind, afford unspeakably more delight than the acquisition and enjoyment of any thing which the children of this world pursue, and perhaps some of them with equal fatigue.

8 Let Christians in other stations also be quickened to exert themselves in the same blessed cause, remembering, that while other things, for which men labour *as in the fire*, can *profit but little*, *godliness is profitable to all*. It hath so far the *promise of this life*, that the godly man shall not want any thing that his Father and his God knows to be truly good for him, and he will probably be abundantly happier in this world, amidst all the calamities to which he may be exposed, than in like circumstances

he could possibly have been, without such a principle of piety in his heart: and it has absolutely *the promise of the life which is to come*, and that such a life, so glorious and so lasting, that the very mention of it may well swallow up the thoughts of this life and its interests, any farther than as they are connected with that. Let us then receive the word with all readiness, and pursue those glorious objects, *trusting in the living God*, who, while he scatters the bounties of his common providence on *all*, is, in a peculiar and most important sense, *the Saviour*, the Guardian, the Father *of those who believe*. SECT. VI. Ver. 9 10

SECT. VII.

Directions for Timothy's conduct towards persons in different circumstances, and particularly elders and widows: which leads the apostle to give some advices concerning those matrons who were intrusted by the church with some peculiar office, and supported out of the public stock in the discharge of it. 1 Tim. V. 1—16.

1 TIMOTHY, V. 1.

1 TIM. V. 1. Rebuke not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father, *and* the younger men as brethren.

THY office, O Timothy, will often oblige thee to censure the conduct of others, and sometimes of those who are more advanced in age than thyself. But remember to do it with a becoming modesty and tenderness. *Rebuke not an aged man*[a] *severely, but* rather *exhort* [*him*] *as a father*, to perform whatever duty he neglects, or to avoid those temptations which may be dangerous to him: [*and*] as to *the younger*, though thou mayest use more freedom with them, yet remember still to treat them with kindness and affection, *as brethren*, and not with a lordly and supercilious contempt. Address thyself to *the aged women, as mothers*, [*and*] *to the younger, as sisters, with all chastity*, and the strictest decorum in thy converse with them; remembering how many eyes are upon thee, and how fatal any thing, which might in that respect, bring the least blemish upon thy character, would be to the honour and success of thy ministry, and to the credit of the gospel SECT. VII. 1 Tim. V. 1.

2 The elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity. 2

[a] *An aged man*] The opposition between elder and younger, plainly shews that πρεσβύτερος here signifies an *aged person*, which may further be argued from the opposition between elder and younger in the next verse

SECT. VII.

and its professors. *Honour*, and endeavour honourably to support, those *widows who are truly widows*,[b] and whose destitute circumstances recommend them as the certain objects of charity. *But if any widow hath children, or grand-children*, who are capable of supporting her, *let them learn first to exercise* grateful *piety at home, and to repay* the benefits they have received from *their parents*, or remoter progenitors, in their necessities, before they talk of extending their generosity to others; *for this is* good and decent, fair and *beautiful* in the eyes of men, *and* it is likewise *acceptable before God*, who requires us, out of regard to his honour and favour, to attend carefully to the duties of those relations in which we stand to each other.

1 Tim. v. 3.

3 Honour widows, that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 *Now* that you may understand the character, to which I advise you to confine your charitable exhibitions, I must add, that *she who is truly a widow, and* thus *left alone*, and destitute of the assistance of human friends, is one that *hopeth in* the good providence of *God*, reposing herself with humble confidence on his faithful care, *and continues* constantly *day and night*[c] *in supplications and prayers*, makes devotion her business, in the proper return of its daily seasons, and endeavours to be as much at leisure for it as her circumstances in life will permit. *But she that liveth luxuriously*, as some Christian widows, to the great shame and scandal of their profession, do, *is* indeed *dead while she liveth*,[d] as to the noblest ends and purposes of life.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.

7 *And* as this is a very important article, and *these things*, in some degree, affect Christians of all circumstances and relations in life, who are too ready to lose themselves in the pursuit of sensual pleasure, I desire thou wouldst *give* them *in charge* to all thy hearers, *that* so *they may* in

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

[b] *Truly such.*] Here is, as Calvin justly observes, an allusion to the Greek word χηρα, which signifies a person in *distressed* and *indigent* circumstances.

[c] *Day and night.*] That is, *continually*, morning and evening, and on every proper occasion, by night or by day, 1 Thess. ii. 9; iii. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 3.

[d] *Dead while she liveth.*] Some philosophers, even among the barbarous nations, are noted for having spoken of those as *dead*, who deserted what their sects esteemed the doctrines of truth and abandoned themselves to sensual pa sions. The word σπαταλωσα, which we may render *living in pleasure*, properly signifies *faring deliciously*; and Dr. Whitby observes, it especially refers to drinking strong and costly liquors.

this respect *be blameless*,[e] and that by maintaining a due government of themselves, and strenuously attending to the duties of life, they may answer the obligations under which they lie. 1 Tim. v. 7.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

But especially insist upon it, that a due care 8 be taken of the poor, by those of their relations who are capable of supporting them; for *if any do not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own house*,[f] *he hath*, whatever he may pretend, in effect and practically *denied the faith*, *and*, on the whole, *is worse than an infidel*:[g] bringing a greater dishonour upon the gospel, than one who openly professes to reject it, while he is thus deficient in those duties which common humanity teaches even many of the heathens to practise themselves, and to inculcate upon others.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number, under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

Let not a widow be taken 9 *upon the list*[h] of those to be maintained by the church, and to minister in the office of deaconesses in it, who is *under sixty years old*, and then, only such a person *who hath been the wife of one man*,[i] and avoided all scandalous com-

[e] *That they may be blameless.*] Some would refer this to the *widows*; but the gender of the word ανεπιλημπτοι rather favours our referring it, either to the *deacons*, or to *Timothy's hearers* in general; since it is certain, that *widows* were not the only persons, who, in so luxurious a city as Ephesus, were in danger of falling into such sensualities as he had been warning them against.

[f] *Those of his own house.*] Των ιδιων seems to signify *domestics*, or those who dwelt with the indolent person here spoken of; and it would certainly be an aggravation of his neglect, if these relations, whom he was unwilling according to his ability to maintain, were in his family, and consequently under his eye; so that there does not seem to be reason, with Mr. Hallet, (Notes on Script. Vol. I. p. 31.) to conclude, it signifies those of the *household of faith*, as the apostle speaks elsewhere, (Gal. vi. 10.) that is, *believing relatives*.

[g] *Worse than an infidel.*] Dr. Whitby proves, by very apposite citations, that the heathens were sensible of the reasonableness and necessity of taking care of near relations, and especially of parents, when they fell into poverty.

[h] *Taken upon the list*, &c.] Καταλεγεσθω

[i] *The wife of one man.*] It is very certain, that second marriages in general are not condemned by Christianity, and it would be a great objection against it if they were. The apostle expressly advises the *younger widows to marry again*, ver. 14; and it would seem very hard to exclude

SECT. VII.

merce with others. And, as some peculiar trust is reposed in such, let care be taken, that she be [*one*] *who hath a reputation for good works* in general; and she will especially be worthy of such an encouragement and honour, *if she have educated* her own *children* with care, or any other children who have been committed to her; *if* in her more prosperous days *she have* expressed an hospitable temper, and *lodged strangers*, who have been at a loss for necessary accommodations on their journies; especially *if she have washed the saints' feet*, and in other respects releived in a proper manner Christians in such circumstances; *if she have*, in other instances, according to her abilities, *assisted the afflicted*, and, in short, *if she have followed every good work*, and endeavoured to adorn her profession by a benevolent and useful life. *But refuse* to admit into such an office *the younger widows; for when they grow wanton*,[k] as (though such a disposition be directly *against* the laws of *Christ*,) many in such a circumstance of life do, *they will marry*, and perhaps to husbands who are strangers to Christianity. Thereby *exposing themselves to* just blame of men and *condemnation* from God, *because they have disannulled their first faith*, and violated their engagement to the church, when it assigned them such an office, to which it would be very inconvenient to admit persons that have any views of entering again into the conjugal state: not to say that some men have been enticed, by very improper alliances, to throw off even the general profession of Christianity. *And* indeed, with relation to several of such, (as I have observed in societies less careful in this

1 Tim. V. 10.

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse; for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry:

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal

them afterwards from this office, how fit soever they might be for it on other accounts, merely because they had done it. I therefore am inclinable to think the meaning of the expression may be, one who chastely confined herself to one husband, while in the married relation; for it is certain, that it never was usual among the Jews or the Greeks, to admit women to have more than one husband at once. It may deserve consideration, whether this may not reflect some light on the correspondent phrase, when applied to a bishop, chap. iii. 2.

[k] *Grown wanton*, &c.] Καταστηνιασωσι is a strong expression, which cannot be exactly rendered into English. When these widows grew negligent of their proper duty, sensual affections might prevail upon them; and their credit among Christians being hurt by such an unbecoming conduct, it is very probable they might often be forced to take up with *heathen husbands*, and so might at length be led to apostatise from Christianity.

they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tatlers also, and busy bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

respect than were to be wished,) these women *also*, while they pretend to continue in their office, *being idle* and slothful in the province *they* have undertaken, instead of staying at home, and attending the proper duty of their charge, *learn* [*a habit of*] gadding abroad, and *going from house to house; and* [*they are*] *not only idle, but triflers also*[1] *and busy-bodies:* there is a levity and impertinence in their behaviour, which is the natural result of neglecting to keep themselves well employed; and they are often *speaking things* that are very *unbecoming*, which do loudly proclaim the irregularity of their disposition, and shew how much their minds are vitiated and disordered.

SECT. VII. 1 Tim. v. 13.

14 I will therefore that the young women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

I would therefore have the younger [*widows,*] instead of thinking of a trust and situation, for which they are generally so unfit, to *marry* again, if they are so inclined, as it is generally best that they should; *and* employ themselves in such cares as suit the mistress of a family, that they may *breed children*, [*and*] *govern their domestic affairs so as to give no occasion to the adversary*, who is glad to find any excuse for it, *to speak reproachfully* of religion, on account of the unsuitable behaviour of its professors. And I give the caution with the greater solicitude, because it is too evident, that as *for some*, from whom the churches expected better things, they *have already turned aside after Satan*, so as to follow his leading and impulse, in direct opposition to the law of Christ, and much to the detriment of his interest.

14

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

15

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

But if any believer of either sex have near relations, who are *widows*, *let them*, as I advised before, *take care of them* at home, *that the church may not be burdened* with more charitable cases than it can properly support, *but may take care of* [*those who are,*] as I have said, *truly widows*, and must otherwise be left altogether desolate.

16

[1] *Triflers.*] The word φλυαροι seems to be derived from φλυειν, which I think properly signifies the noise which water makes when it is ready to boil over. See Raph. in loc. And therefore it very well expresses the inward *fermentation*, (if I may so speak,) in the minds of these trifling people, which they vented by unprofitable discourses.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. VII. Ver. 1 4, 16

MINISTERS are instructed by this apostolical advice, in that difficult duty, of managing reproof aright. Churches may learn how their poor are to be treated, and children may be reminded of that grateful tribute which they owe especially to their aged and necessitous parents. No recompense can be fully adequate, but surely to a generous temper nothing can be more delightful, than to soothe the declining years of those by whom our infant-days were sustained, our feeble childhood supported, and our giddy youth moderated and directed.

6 Let St. Paul's sentiments of a luxurious life be particularly attended to in this age of ours, in which so many are entirely devoted to these pleasures. They call it living, but the wiser apostle pronounces it a kind of moral death. And many of the heathens themselves have been instructed by nature to speak in a language like his. Nay some of them acted on this principle, in a manner, which might shame most that call themselves Christians. Let us learn to form our taste on nobler pleasures than those on which thoughtless multitudes are so intent. Let us cultivate those that are suited to our rational and immortal spirits, and that will not only follow us into the invisible world, but will there be exalted and improved.

But let us be particularly careful, that, while religion raises us
8 above a sensual life, we do not make use of it as a pretence to excuse ourselves from attending to social duty. To neglect a due care of those whom Providence has committed to us, would, in the apostle's language, be a *denial of the faith*, and would even argue us *worse than infidels*, who, deficient as they were in the knowledge of God, or in such regards to him as were even proportionable to what they knew, discoursed largely and excellently on the obligations of justice and benevolence to our fellow-creatures, and were themselves examples of what they taught in relation to them.

10 Among other virtues here spoken of with due honour, a proper care in the *education of children* is none of the least. Let Christians of both sexes be diligent in it, and let women, to whom the chief care of children is consigned in those tender years, when the deepest and surest impressions are often made, be sen-
13 sible, how great advantage the public may receive by their wise and pious conduct towards them. While many are *triflers* and *busy-bodies, running from house to house, and speaking things which they ought not*, let *women professing godliness* remember
17 they are to adorn it by the exercise of *domestic* virtues, so as to cut off occasion of *speaking reproachfully*, even from the ingenious malice of *adversaries*: occasion too often given by those

who, while they follow the gay desires of their hearts, and the fashions of this vain world, seem to have forgotten what the apostle intended by the awful and lively phrase of being turned aside after Satan; and make themselves his more secure and certain prey, by every step they take in those flattering paths through which he would lead them to final destruction. SECT. VII. Ver. 15

SECT. VIII.

The apostle adds directions concerning the regard to be shewn by the people to their faithful ministers; concerning the method of proceeding against those who were accused of any fault; and the most prudent and regular manner of treating candidates for the ministry. The section concludes with some other necessary advices and particulars for the instruction of Christian slaves. 1 Tim. V. 17—*to the end.* Chap. VI. 1, 2—

1 TIMOTHY V. 17.

1 TIM. V. 17.

LET the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

I HAVE already been giving you some directions with relation to those who are elders in age, and now let me add a word or two concerning those who are distinguished by the office they bear in the Christian church, and have that title of respect and reverence given them on that account. And here *let the elders which preside well*[a] *be esteemed worthy of double honour*[b], and, as circumstances may require and admit, let them be respectfully maintained by the society; *especially those who*, to all their other kind cares of a more private nature, add an exemplary attendance to that of public instruction, and *labour* with diligence and zeal *in* administering *the word, and* stating and vindicating the *doctrine* of the gospel in your religious SECT. VIII. 1 Tim. V. 17.

[a] *The elders who preside well.*] Mr. Reeves (Apol. Vol. I. p. 115. note p) must surely be driven to very great extremities, when, to ward off some consequences which were to him disagreeable, he concludes that these elders were bishops, in the English sense of the word, or persons of an order *superior* to common ministers: which interpretation would suppose, that some such officers in the church might *preside* well, though they did not *labour* in the *word*, while able to do it, which the following words evidently suppose the elders here spoken of to be; for else their being disabled by age, or any other infirmities would be a strong reason for their being honourably maintained, on account of the services of their better years. Compare note on 1 Thess. v. 12.

[b] *Double honour.*] It is a scrupulous nicety of interpretation, to explain this as a decision, that they were to have twice as much as the *deaconesses*. Different circumstances might require different exhibitions to persons in the same office. It seems only to express a plentiful maintenance (according to what they needed, and the society could afford), given in a liberal and respectful manner.

SECT. VIII.

assemblies.[c] *For* you well remember, I doubt not, that *the scripture has said* again and again, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn*, but shalt allow him, while labouring upon it, to eat of it as his hunger requires, (Deut. xxv. 24; 1 Cor. ix. 9; and note): *and* the Old Testament, as well as the words of our Lord and the reason of mankind, teaches us, that *the workman* [*is*] *worthy of his hire:*[d] on which account the law requires that, instead of being entirely withheld from him, it should not be delayed for a day. Deut. xxiv. 14; Lev. xix. 13. Persons therefore, who labour in so honourable and important a work, are by no means to be neglected, nor suffered to want necessary support and encouragement. Great care should also be taken that their reputation, on which their usefulness will so much depend, may not be lightly impeached. Accordingly, *do not receive an accusation against an elder, unless on the testimony of two or three* credible *witnesses*; for the single report of any one person is not material enough to set against the word of an elder, maintaining his own innocence.

1 Tim. v. 18.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and, the labourer is worthy of his reward.

19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

You will, I doubt not, use your utmost endeavours to preserve the purity of the church; yet as offences will certainly come, let me advise you to keep up a due solemnity in church-censures; and as for *those that sin*[e] in any scandalous and remarkable manner, *rebuke* them *before all, that even the rest* of the congregation *may fear*, and stand upon their guard against those temptations which have brought upon others such public admonition and reproof. *I*

20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

21 I charge *thee* be-

[c] *Especially they who labour.*] This seems to intimate, that there were some who, though they *presided* in the church, were *not* employed in *preaching*. Limborch indeed is of opinion, that κοπιωντες signifies those who did even *fatigue themselves with their extraordinary labours*, which some might not do, who yet in the general *preached* well, supposing preaching to be a part of their work. Limb. Theol. lib. vii. cap. iv. § 10. But it seems to me much more natural to follow the former interpretation. [d] Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

[d] *The workman, &c.*] As the very words of this passage only occur Luke x. 7; it is the opinion of the ingenious Mr. Seed, that St. Paul here quotes these words of the evangelist as of equal authority with those of Moses. Deut. xxv. 4. Seed's Ser. Vol. II. p. 292.

[e] *Those that sin.*] I see no reason for understanding this of *offending elders*; though, were it to be so taken, it would by a strong consequence be applicable to others. A humour of seeking a stricter connection than is any way necessary, has led many commentators into very limited, and sometimes into whimsical interpretations.

fore God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

know how contrary these faithful proceedings may sometimes be to flesh and blood, and therefore solemnly *charge* [*thee*] *before* the blessed *God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels*,[r] (who, having kept their stations, when so many of their fellows were seduced by Satan, are now confirmed in a state of immutable felicity, and shall attend our common Lord to the awful judgment of the great day,) *that thou keep these things without* any *prejudice* against any part of them; *doing nothing by partiality*, in favour of one person more than another, according to the inducement of private friendship or affection.

SECT. VIII. 1 Tim. v. 21

22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins:

And as it is a matter of so great importance to the Christian church, what persons are admitted to minister in it, I must also charge thee, that thou *lay hands suddenly* and rashly *on no man*,[s] to set him apart for that sacred trust, before his character and qualifications have been fully examined and thoroughly approved. *Neither make thyself partaker in the sins of others*, as thou wilt certainly do, if thou art the means of bringing those that thou mightest have discovered to be

22

[r] *The elect angels.*] Mr. Jos. Mede interprets this of the *seven archangels* chosen by God to the greatest nearness to him, and highest honours in the court of heaven. But all his arguments, to prove that there is *such* a number of celestial spirits, in such *posts of distinction*, appeared to me so precarious, that I rather chose to explain the words in a more general manner, on principles which I think much more certain.

[s] *Lay hands suddenly* and rashly.] That this is the signification of ταχέως, Raphelius has sufficiently shewn. Though some have referred this to the laying on of hands in the *absolution* of notorious offenders, it seems safer and more natural to explain it of *ordination to the ministry*; in reference to which this rite is often alluded to in these epistles. It has been said by one of the most rational and candid patrons of Diocesan Episcopacy, "What need was there that, after the set-"tlement of a Christian church at Ephe-"sus, Timothy should be sent to *ordain* "*elders*, if a right of ordination lay in "presbyters, or in a *church*, nominating "to the pastoral office? Especially, how "should he, on this supposition, be di-"rected to perform it *himself*, and not "merely to advise and assist others in the "performance." Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Hoadly,) of Epis. p. 392. But I must beg leave to answer, that this does not appear to be the chief reason of Timothy's being sent to Ephesus, or rather being left there, when Paul went into Macedonia (chap. i. 3.) Various circumstances of this church might require, that a person of Timothy's extraordinary gifts and character, should be left to superintend their affairs: and it might reasonably be taken for granted, that, as he was there by the apostle's special direction, so much regard would be paid to him, that he would be desired to preside in their sacred solemnities, in the same manner as Paul had done when among them. But that no elder could at any time be ordained, without the presence and concurrence of such an extraordinary person, and that such an extraordinary power and influence should afterwards be transferred to others, not in like manner qualified for the management of it, are things neither easy to be proved, nor rashly to be taken for granted, on a question of so great moment.

SECT. VIII. unworthy men into the ministry; who may have much greater opportunities of doing mischief, in consequence of their bearing such an office, and may give great scandal, and lead many others astray. Therefore *keep thyself pure* from such pollutions, as well as all others, by guarding against the first occasion of them. A recollection of the difficulty of thy work, and what I know of the tenderness of thy constitution, and thy great abstinence, engage me to caution thee, that thou *do not* confine thyself *any longer* to *drink water* alone, *but use a little wine* mingled with it, *for the sake of thy stomach*, which needs to be strengthened by that more generous liquor in a moderate quantity; *and* out of regard to *thy frequent infirmities*, which otherwise may grow upon thee, so as to render thee incapable of that public service for which thou art so well qualified.[h]

1 Tim. v. 22. keep thyself pure.

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.

24 In judging of characters, and passing sentence, according to the advice given above, you will find it necessary in different cases to use different precautions. *The sins of some men are manifest, leading on to* pass *judgment* on them without any difficulty; *whereas some follow after*, and are so artfully disguised, that it will require great diligence and strict examination to detect them.

24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some *men* they follow after.

25 *So also the good works of some are manifest* to all, and spread a kind of glory around those that perform them, which renders them lovely and venerable in all eyes: *and those which are otherwise*, though for a while concealed under the thickest veils that humility can spread over them, *cannot* long *be* entirely *hid*. They will appear on accurate observation; and as they will at the last day be laid open to their public ho-

25 Likewise also the good works *of some* are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

[h] *Use a little wine*, &c.] One cannot forbear reflecting here, how very temperate Timothy must have been, to need an advice of this kind; which amounts to no more than mingling a little wine with his water. And what is said of his *many infirmities* compared with the apostle's exhortation to him, to be *instant in preaching* the word, may certainly teach us, that every weakness of constitution is not to be acquiesced in as an excuse for not going on with the ministry; though, to be sure, great allowances are to be made for bodily infirmities, and life itself may often depend upon seasonable interruptions of public labour. Sir Norton Knatchbull, observing that the connection is so broken between the 22 and 24 verses, by the insertion of this advice in this place, conjectures that Paul might write it in the margin by way of postscript, and that it was introduced into the text by the mistake of some early transcriber.

nour, they will in the mean time recommend such silent and reserved Christians to the esteem and respect of those who are intimately conversant with them; and may even prove the means of advancing them to some important trusts, which they are not the less fit for, because they have so low an opinion of their own merit. SECT. VIII. 1 Tim. v. 25.

VI. 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed.

I shall only here add a word or two concerning servants, whom, inferior as their station in life is, I would not have you overlook; since their souls are equally valuable before God with those of their superiors, and much of the credit of Christianity is concerned in their conduct and behaviour. *Let* therefore *as many servants as are under the yoke* of bondage, *account their own masters worthy of all* that civil *honour* and respect which suits the station in which they respectively are; not taking occasion from their own religious knowledge and privileges, to despise and rebel against them; *that the name and doctrine of God*, which they profess, *may not be blasphemed* by their insolence and pride. VI. 1.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren: but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.

2 *And as for those* servants *who* are so happy as to *have believing masters, let them not* presume upon that account to *despise* [*them*] *because they are brethren*, and with respect to sacred privileges, equal in Christ their common Lord; *but let them rather serve* [*them*] with so much the greater care, tenderness, and respect, *because they are faithful and beloved*, [*and*] *partakers with them of the* great and glorious *benefit*[1] which the gos-

[1] *Partakers with them of the benefit.*] Some would render οἱ της ευεργεσιας ἀντιλαμβανομενοι, &c. *because they who partake of the benefit*, that is, the benefit of their service, *are faithful and beloved*. But this seems to take it for granted, that what the apostle exhorted to was already actually done; that is, that such faithful services *were* rendered. Others, as Mr. Cradock has observed (Apost. Hist. p. 221), would translate it, *who will be careful to recompense the well-doing of their servants*; but I think ευεργεσια signifies a *benefit freely conferred*, and therefore is hardly fit to express even the cheerful and exact obedience of slaves. If this clause be referred to the *servants*, and the whole be rendered, *but rather let them who partake of the benefit*, that is, who have a share in the same blessed hope with their masters, *do service to them, because they are faithful and beloved*, the sense will be so far the same, that ευεργεσια will signify that great and glorious *benefit*, which by virtue of our Christian profession, superiors and inferiors equally share; and strongly suggests, what a band of union the participation of it should in all reason prove. But this supposes a transposition which seemed unnecessary; so that this is on the whole one of the many texts, where, having examined a variety of versions, we have been obliged to acquiesce in our own, which is in the main a very good one; and generally gives the *true* sense, though the elegance and spirit of it may often be improved.

SECT. VIII.

pel brings to all its faithful professors, of whatsoever rank or profession in life. And let the thought of the degree in which they share the
1 Tim. VI. 2. favour of God, the tender bond in which as fellow-Christians they are joined, and the hope of partaking with them in all the final blessings of an happy immortality, while it engages their servants to behave towards them in a becoming manner, teach the masters duly to condescend to them, and treat them, not only with justice, but with kindness.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE regards here required to the elders who preside well, and who labour in the word and doctrine, are in themselves so reason-
Ver. 17. able, that where the other duties of Christianity are attended to, and the inestimable blessings of it duly apprehended and esteemed, there will be no need of insisting largely upon them. To be
19 cautious how we lightly believe any report to the injury of such, is what we owe to ourselves as well as them, since our own improvement, by their ministration, will be greatly obstructed by any prejudices taken against their persons.

Let the ministers of the gospel remember, how much it is their duty to appear strenuously in defence of their Master's precepts,
20 and to reprove bold and insolent offenders, in whatsoever rank they may stand. And, lest riches, and power, and greatness of station, should obstruct their faithful execution of this office, let
21 them think of the *solemn charge* they have received *before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels*, and of the appearance which they and their people must make before the awful tribunal of *Christ, when he shall come in his own glory and that of his Father*, and attended by all his *holy angels*. The frequent consideration of that important day would have an uniform influence on the whole of their conduct; it would particularly make them careful, that they do not contract pollutions, and make themselves *partakers in other men's sins*, by *laying hands suddenly* on any; but use a proper care in examining, that in the great business of ordination they may act on the conviction of their consciences in the sight of God, and maintain an unbiassed regard to the honour of the great Redeemer and the salvation of
23 souls. Yet let them still be severer towards themselves than others, and maintain that strict temperance and self-government in every respect which may become the dignity of their characters, and command the reverence of all about them.

24 Let us all endeavour to be shining examples of good works, and while so many declare their sins openly, and send them, as it

were before them to judgment, let us never be ashamed of religion. Yet where a modest reserve may be conveniently maintained, let us study it, and always avoid an unnecessary ostentation, as remembering the time will come, when those good works, which have been most solicitously concealed from the eyes of men, will be publicly honoured and rewarded by God. In expectation of that day, let us all attend to our proper offices, whether in superior or inferior stations of life, studying so to behave, as, *that the name and doctrine of God may never be blasphemed* upon our account, and always feeling the force of that endearing engagement to all social duties, which arises from our sharing with all true Christians in the favour of God, and in the blessings and hopes of his gospel.

SECT. VIII. Ver. 25. Chap. VI. 1, 2.

SECT. IX.

The apostle presses Timothy to urge on his hearers the great things which relate to practical godliness, as what will be attended with the happiest consequences; and cautions against covetousness, as the root of all evil. 1 Tim. VI.—2—12.

1 TIMOTHY VI.—2.

1 TIM. VI. 2. THESE things teach and exhort.

THESE things, which I have been mentioning, take care, O Timothy, to *teach and exhort* thine hearers always to maintain a due regard to them. And *if any one teach otherwise*, if he attempt to broach principles contrary to these great maxims *and attend not*[a] *to* such sound and *wholesome words*, [*even*] *to those of our Lord Jesus Christ*,[b] as these may with strict propriety be called, *and* which express *the doctrine* [*that is*] *agreeable* and subservient *to* the great cause of practical *godliness*, which it is the declared design of the gospel to promote in the world; Whatever fair shews of simplicity and humility he may affect, *he is* certainly *proud*, and, whatever conceit he may have of

SECT. IX. 1 Tim. VI. 2.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 He is proud,

[a] *Attend not.*] I think it is with great reason, that the learned Dr. Bentley supposes, that the original reading was not προσερχεται, which is seldom used in this sense, but προσεχει, or rather προσεχῃ, which has been thus used in this epistle. Chap. i. 4. See Phil. Lips. against Coll. p. 72, 73.

[b] *Words of our Lord Jesus Christ.*] I neither suppose, with Mr. Pyle, that this refers to Mat. xxi. 27, and the many parallel places, nor with others, to any sayings of our Lord's which *tradition* had as yet continued, but which are now lost. It seems much more natural to conclude, it goes on this important principle, that what the apostle wrote, as by Divine direction, was in effect the *words* and commandments of Christ. Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

SECT. IX.

1 Tim. VI. 4.

his superior knowledge, he is *one who knows nothing* to any good purpose; *but*, like a man *raving* and delirious in a fever, he runs on, declaiming *on* idle *questions*,[c] *and* useless *debates about words; from whence* no good can be expected to *arise*, but, on the contrary, a great variety of mischief, *envying* of those more regarded than themselves, *contention* with others who will not submissively yield to what such self-sufficient teachers dictate, *abusive language*, which their intemperate zeal deals round to all who offend them, and *evil suspicions*, and obnoxious representations of the worthiest and most amia-
5 ble characters: Angry *debates of men whose minds are corrupted and averse from the truth*, for which they pretend so eagerly to plead; *while they* seem to *suppose* that which promises the largest quantity of *gain*, *to be* most worthy of their pursuit; and would, if possible, varnish it over with the venerable name of *godliness*. *Turn away* therefore *from such*, and have no intimacy
6 with them. *Whereas*, on the contrary, if any man will but have the integrity and resolution to follow true religion, wherever it leads him, he will certainly find that *godliness* which is so naturally accompanied *with* inward *contentment*[d] and peace of mind, in every circumstance of life which Providence may appoint, *is* indeed *great gain*; and does much more to promote real happiness, than any accession of wealth could pos-
7 sibly do. And it is the truest wisdom to accustom our minds to such reflections as these; *for we brought nothing into the world* along with us, but were thrown naked upon the indulgent provision which our gracious Creator has been

knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words; whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into *this*

[c] *Doting on questions*, &c.] It is so well known that νοσων signifies a person in a *distempered* state, that it hardly required the pains which Dr. Abraham Taylor has taken to prove it, by a large collection of authorities. Bishop Wilkins would render it, he is *sick of questions*, or of the *wrangling disease*, with which, it is much to be lamented, that the Christian clergy, as well a laity, have so generally been infected, in almost all ages and nations. Wilk. Serm. p. 73. The word here seems to express the effect of a disease upon the mind, in which view, raving appeared a more proper word than doting.

[d] *With contentment.*] Diodate thinks αυταρκεια here signifies a *competency*; but it gives a much nobler sense, to suppose the apostle to intimate, that *contentment* will attend *godliness*, as its inseparable companion; and consequently that the godly man will be happy, whatever his circumstances in life may be, and even much more so, than any accumulation of worldly wealth can make him.

world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out.

pleased to make for us; [*and it is*] *evident that,* whatever treasures the most insatiable avarice could amass, *we cannot carry any thing out* of it, but must in a little time return to the dust, stripped of all. SECT. IX. 1 Tim. VI. 7.

8 And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.

8 *Having therefore,* while we continue in this transitory and uncertain life, *food and raiment,* and having the other necessaries of it, *let us be content with these,* and not seek, with restless earnestness and solicitude, the great things of it, which are often of so short a continuance, and of so precarious, as well as so unsatisfying a nature.

9 But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

9 With these sentiments we may enjoy what happiness is to be expected in a world like this; *but they who are determined that* at all adventures *they will be rich, fall headlong into* many a dangerous *temptation, and* many *a* fatal *snare, and* [*into*] *many foolish and mischievous desires; which* not only sink men beneath the dignity of their nature, but prove the occasion of much further mischief; insomuch that they frequently *plunge men into* an irrecoverable abyss of *ruin and destruction,* in which they lose their worldly possessions, and what is infinitely more valuable, their souls too.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

10 *For the* excessive *love of money is the root of all* moral *evil, which some having greedily desired, have* so debauched their minds with corrupt prejudices, that they have *wandered from the faith,* so as to abandon the very profession of the gospel; *and* while they were dreaming only of the pleasurable consequences that would attend their more exalted circumstances in human life, have *pierced themselves through with many sorrows,* and felt long and incurable pains, by the numerous wounds they have given to their own consciences, as it were on every side.[e]

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow

11 *But thou, O man of God,* whom he hath honoured as he did the prophets of old, making thee his messenger to thy fellow-creatures, *shun these things;* these insatiable desires of worldly

[e] *Pierced themselves through.*] I have endeavoured in the paraphrase, (though I could not do it in the version,) to give something of the emphasis which Leigh and other critics have observed in the word περιεπειραν, which, we are told, properly signifies, they have *stabbed themselves,* as it were, *from head to feet,* so as to be all covered with wounds. And this indeed happily expresses the innumerable outrages done to conscience by those madmen who have taken up this fatal resolution, that they will at all adventures be rich.

SECT. IX.

possessions and enjoyments, which will render thee most unfit for so sacred an office; *and pursue*, as the richest prize, and the noblest gain, the practice of universal *righteousness* towards men, and *piety* towards God, *fidelity* in every branch of trust committed to thee; *love* to all mankind, *patience* under every affliction, and *meekness* under every provocation. *Maintain*, in the most strenuous manner, and with all the force thy soul can exert, *the good*, noble, and glorious, *combat of faith*;[t] *lay hold on* the prize of *eternal life*; and let none, how violently soever they may assault thee, wrest it out of thine hands: even that life, *to* the hope of *which thou hast been* solemnly *called*, *and* in pursuance of it, *hast confessed a good*, fair, and worthy *confession before many witnesses*, who were present on that solemn day when thou wert given up to the full exercise of the ministry.

1 Tim. VI. 11. low after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 10. If we do indeed believe the love of money to be the root of all evil, let us set ourselves seriously to extirpate it out of our bosoms, and to imbibe this true philosophy of the apostle, to seek 6 our gain in that godliness on which contentment waits, and which makes its disciples happy on the easiest terms, by moder- 8 ating their desires. Food and raiment of one kind or another few want. But where there is real necessity, and has been a care to behave well, if a man's own stock be deficient, he is generally supplied from the charity of others; and true piety and greatness of mind, can enjoy the gift of Providence on these terms without repining, being truly sensible how little, even the best, amidst so many imperfections and miscarriages, can deserve to receive any thing from God by the instrumentality of any creature.

To this day do we see such facts as taught the apostle these useful remarks, independent on those miraculous influences by

[t] *Maintain the good combat*, &c.] These and the following words are plainly *agonistical*, and refer to the eagerness with which they who contended in the Grecian games struggled for, and laid hold upon, the crown; and the degree to which the presence of many spectators, or (as the apostle elsewhere speaks,) the cloud of witnesses, animated them in their contests for it. It might perhaps more literally be rendered, *I exercise the good exercise*; but that it is a Grecism, which the English language will not conveniently allow; nor does the word *exercise* by any means express the force of ἀγωνα, which always supposes an opponent to be resisted, as *combat* also does. The learned Dr. Lardner very justly observes, we are often liable to be diverted from the right meaning by a translation, which yet is not the fault of it, but owing to some defect in modern languages, which want words exactly correspondent to the ancient original. Lardn. Serm. p. 270.

which he was guided, in things spiritual and evangelical. As we see the new-born race of human creatures rising naked into life, we see death stripping the rich, the noble, and the powerful, and returning them naked to the dust. In the mean time, while we may observe many in lower circumstances cheerful and thankful, we see those who are *determined on being rich, falling into temptations and snares.* We see them *piercing themselves through with many sorrows, and plunging themselves into* irrecoverable *ruin and destruction*, while they pursue, to the utmost verge of the fatal precipice, those shadowy phantoms, which owe all their semblance of reality to the magic of those passions which riches or the desire of them have excited. SECT. IX. Verse 7 9 10

Happy would it be for the church of Christ, if these important doctrines of practical religion were more inculcated, and less of the zeal of its teachers spent in discussing vain questions and intricate strifes about words, which have been productive of so much envy and contention, obloquy and suspicion. Let the *men of God* therefore, inculcate *righteousness and faith, piety and charity, patience and meekness*, and let them endeavour to render their lessons successful, by a care themselves to pursue those graces; to *exercise themselves* more strenuously in that noble and generous *conflict to which they are called*, so as to *lay hold on* the crown of *eternal life*, and to retain it against the most powerful antagonist. These are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, even these doctrines according to godliness; and the minister, who will be wise enough to preach and act upon these principles, will raise the most lasting character, and secure the most valuable reward. 4 11 12 3

SECT. X.

The apostle concludes with a solemn charge to fidelity in the ministry, and particularly urges Timothy to inculcate on those that were rich, such exhortations and cautions as their peculiar circumstances required. 1 Tim. VI. 13, *to the end.*

1 TIMOTHY VI. 13.

1 TIM. VI. 13. I GIVE thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth

AND now to conclude, *I* solemnly *charge thee*, as *in the presence of God, who*, by his continual energy, animates and *quickens all things*[a], in the whole compass of the creation,

[a] *Quickens all things.*] This seems a very suitable, though oblique intimation, that, should Timothy, after the example of his great Lord, sacrifice his life to the honour of his profession, God, *who raised up Christ from the dead*, was equally able to raise him. And this is most fully expressed and urged, 2 Tim. ii. 8, 10, 11.

SECT. X.

and at his sovereign pleasure revives the dead; *and* in the presence of *Christ Jesus*, *who*, when he was examined *before Pontius Pilate*, *witnessed*, at the apparent hazard of his life, *a good confession*[b], in declaring himself to be indeed a king, though he knew how liable that declaration was to a most unjust and pernicious interpretation! In this august presence do I charge

1 Tim. VI. 13.

all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 thee, O Timothy, *to keep* [*this*] *commandment*, which I have now given thee in all its branches, and to deliver it down to those who may succeed thee, *unspotted and blameless*, that it may shine with uncorrupted lustre through all future ages, even *till the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ*,

14 That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;

15 *Which*, *in his own* appointed *times*, *he shall manifest*, in the most awful and conspicuous manner, [*who is*] *the blessed and* indeed the *only potentate*, before whom no other name or power is worthy of being mentioned. He may with the strictest propriety be spoken of by that title, by which other princes have vainly and blasphemously affected to be called *the King of kings*, *and Lord of lords*, who hath the fates and lives of all the monarchs on earth entirely in his hands, and can dispose of them all according to his so-

15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 vereign pleasure: Even he, *who alone hath immortality* in himself; so that all kinds and degrees of life in others are derived from him, and continually dependent upon him, according to the orders issued from that throne on which he sits supreme, *inhabiting inaccessible light*, *whom no man hath* ever *seen* in the full display of his glory, *nor* indeed *can see*, without being immediately overwhelmed with the first glance of it: *to whom* [*be*] *honour and everlasting dominion* ascribed by us, and by all his creatures through eternal ages. *Amen*.

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.

17 One farther instruction I have to give thee, which I shall here add by way of postscript.

17 Charge them

[b] *Witnessed a good confession.*] This refers to John xviii. 37. Christ's confession before the Jewish high priest, when interrogated upon oath (Mat. xxvi. 63, 64; Mark xiv. 61, 62,) was rather more express, but this before Pilate was more dangerous, as his owning himself a *king*, was the only pretension that was likely to expose him to the resentment of the Roman governor, who had the supreme power of life and death. John xix. 10. It is perhaps called a *good confession*, not only as in itself noble and generous, but as all our hopes of salvation and happiness are built upon the *truth* of it.

SECT. X.

1 Tim. VI. 17.

that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

There are indeed few of *those who are rich in this* present *world*,[c] that embrace the gospel, or will have any regard for the instructions of its ministers. But as it is probable, that some such may be found, in so opulent a city as that of Ephesus, in which thou now residest, and as my own labours there have succeeded with some few in this rank of men, remember that their character and behaviour is of peculiar moment. Do not therefore flatter them, but faithfully *charge* them, to behave in a manner suitable to their distinguished station, and to guard against the snares to which it exposes them; particularly urge it upon them, *that they be not high-minded*, so as to despise their inferiors, who often are in the sight of God much wiser and better than themselves: and, *that they do not trust in uncertain riches*, of which a thousand accidents may immediately deprive them, *but in the living God*, whose favour will be a sure and eternal portion to all that are possessed of it; even in that gracious Being, *who imparts to us all things richly for* our *enjoyment*, and who has so liberally distinguished them by the communications of his bounty. Charge it upon them, *that*, in proportion to the abundance God has given them, *they do good, that they be rich in good works*, that they be *ready to distribute* what Providence hath lodged in their hands. And *willing to communicate*,[d] what they have so freely received; thereby *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the future; that they may*, through the riches of Divine grace, *lay hold on eternal life*, when they relinquish all their possessions here, and find every temporal enjoyment deserting them for ever.

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

18 19

[c] *Rich in this world.*] This clause seems to be added to extenuate the value of riches, which extend only to *this* transitory and precarious *world*, and can neither attend us into the *other*, nor at all influence our happiness there.

[d] *Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*] If these phrases have any thing of a different signification, perhaps it may be, as Archbishop Sharpe explains it: Let them endeavour in the general to do good, not only now and then, in some scanty proportion, but *frequently*, *constantly*, and *abundantly*; not only with their time, labour, and interest, but by distributing of their substance too; and this as freely, as if it were a common stock to which all had a right. Archbishop Sharpe's Serm. Vol. I. p. 136. Yet these expressions clearly shew, that there was not a community of goods among Christians in general, for in that case, there could have been no room for the exhortation and the distinction on which it is founded.

SECT. X.

1 Tim. VI. 20.

To conclude all, *O* my beloved *Timothy*, as thou valuest thine own soul, and desirest to give up thine account with joy, *keep that* gospel *which is lodged with thee*, as a sacred trust, and never suffer it to be wrested out of thy hands. Let thy very soul dwell upon it, *avoiding profane* [*and*] *empty babblings, and the opposition of that which is falsely called knowledge*,[e] but is
21 indeed ignorance, pride, and folly: *Which some having professed* to pursue, *have* fatally *wandered from the* Christian *faith*, some entirely forsaking it, and others corrupting it with such adulterations, that it is hardly to be known for that religion which came immediately out of the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that thou mayest ever oppose such false teachers with integrity, courage, and success, *may* the *grace* of Christ [*be*] ever *with thee* in all things, to guide thy judgment and thy conduct. *Amen.*

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.

21 Which some professing, have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13. O THAT we might often be setting ourselves as *in the presence of God*, the great and blessed God, whose almighty power *quickeneth all things*, and is the life of universal nature, and of *the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead!* Let the thoughts of so august a presence, awaken our souls to diligence in the discharge of our duty, and let it animate us with courage to *witness a good confession*, to whatever inconvenience and danger it may expose us. Never let us forget that appearance which he shall manifest, to whom all these sublime titles be-
15 long, even that *blessed and only Potentate*, before whom all the lustre of all the princes upon earth vanishes in a moment, like that of the smallest stars before the rising sun: *the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone hath immortality, and dwelleth in un-*
16 *approachable light.* How astonishing his goodness in veiling his glory, so that we may approach him, in bowing down his ear to receive our requests, yea in coming to *dwell with that man who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at his word!* (Isa. lxvi. 2.) *To him be honour and power everlasting.* And let his infinite majesty be deeply and affectionately remembered, amidst all the condescensions of his love.

Let the rich in this world, since the riches which here distin-

[e] *Falsely called knowledge.*] Though it is not certain, that the name of *gnostics*, or the *knowing men*, was so early used to denominate a distinct sect, yet it is highly probable, that they who opposed the apostle, made extraordinary pretences to *knowledge*; and this text seems sufficient to prove it.

guish them cannot attend them into another, be engaged to receive with all reverence the charge of our holy apostle. Too many of them walk in pride; but they see by the sepulchres of many, once as opulent and as haughty as themselves, and by a thousand other marks of the Divine power and human weakness, how soon *God is able to abase them.* (Dan. iv. 37.) Forsaking, therefore, what they think their strong tower, and the high wall, which, instead of sheltering, may soon crush them into ruins, let them transfer their confidence to the living God. Alarmed in a state which renders their salvation almost as difficult as *it is for a camel to go through a needle's eye*, let them learn from hence how to improve *what is another's*, in such a manner, that they may in due time *receive what shall be* for ever *their own*; (Luke xvi. 12.) Let them learn to be *rich in good works*, and by a *readiness to distribute and communicate*, let them *lay up a celestial treasure*; and drop with joy every gilded trifle which would hinder their *laying hold on eternal life.* Let the ministers of that great Lord, who is so much higher than all the kings of the earth, at least shew their fidelity to him, in giving such plain and faithful charges, even to those, who, by their outward circumstances, are placed in the highest ranks of life; being infinitely more solicitous about securing their Master's approbation, than gaining the favour of mortal worms, who lift up their heads on high, because they have a few grains of shining dust at their disposal. And may the men of God manifest the like wise and pious magnanimity, in avoiding a vain glitter of a falsely pretended science; when it would either lead them to err from the faith, or to neglect those important articles of it which lie most plain and obvious in the word of God; and for that very reason are too often disregarded by those whom an empty ostentation of subtilty and learning has taught to treat the Divine wisdom of God as foolishness.

SECT. X.

Ver. 17.

18 19

20, 21

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

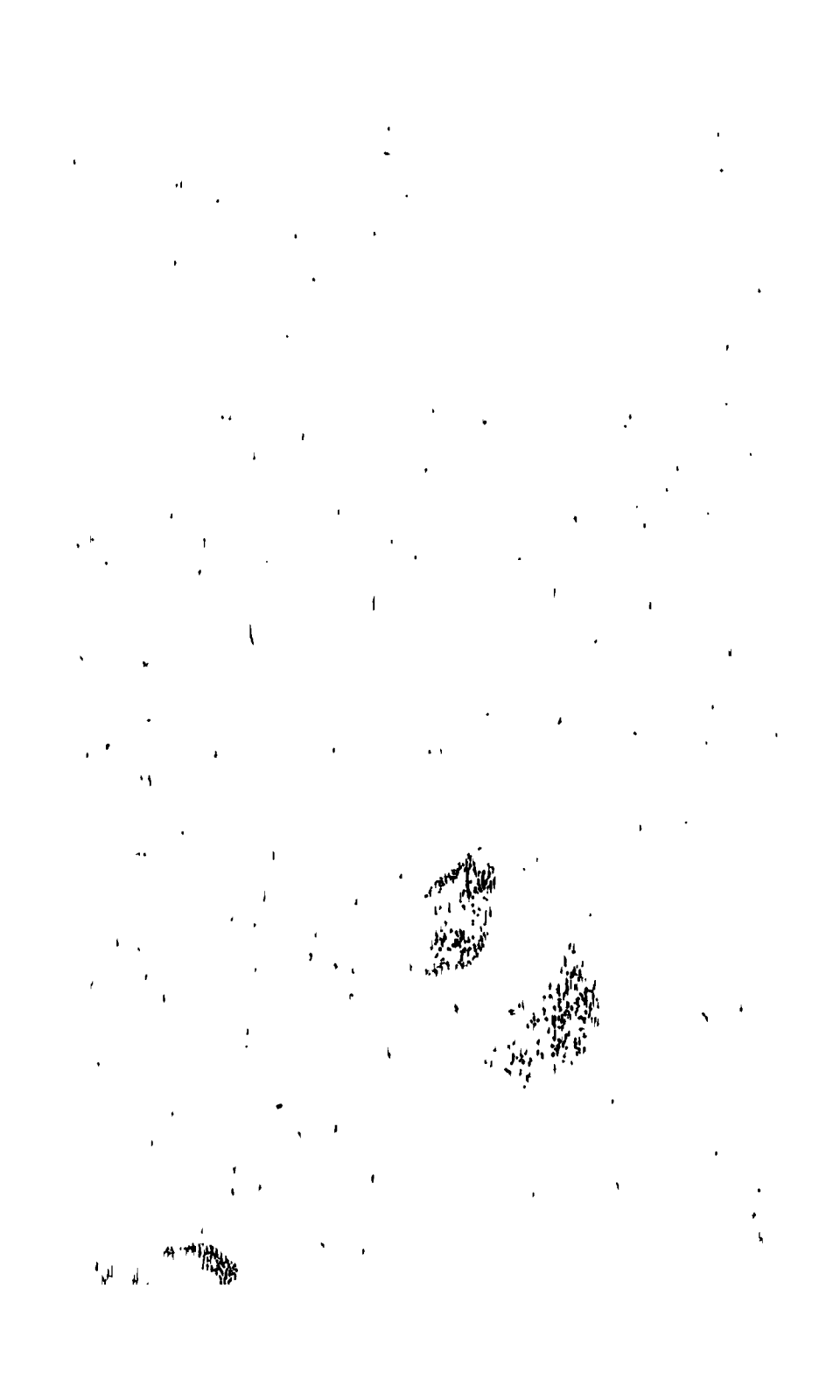
SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

IT is uncertain where Timothy was, when he received this epistle. Some have supposed he must have been at Ephesus; but their arguments in support of that opinion seem inconclusive, (as Mr. Boyse has well observed.) And indeed it does not seem very easy to reconcile this supposition with the apostle's charge, (chap. iv. 13.) to bring with him the *books* and *parchments* he had left at Troas; that city lying so far out of his way from Ephesus to Rome, especially as he had expressed a desire of seeing him as soon as possible. And if it should be pleaded, that the things he sent for might not then be at Troas, but at some other place that might lie in his way, it is sufficient to answer, that it would, in that case, have been more to Paul's purpose, to have directed Timothy where to have found them, than to inform him where they were first left.—To which may be added, that if Timothy had been at Ephesus when this epistle was written, the apostle would hardly have said, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," (chap. iv. 12.) but rather, "Tychicus have I sent to *you*."

That this epistle was written while Paul was under confinement at Rome, is universally agreed; but whether it was during his first or second imprisonment, has

been matter of debate. Several learned writers, among whom are Hammond, Lightfoot, and Cave, have maintained the *former* opinion; while others have argued in favour of the *latter*, from chap. i. 18. where Paul, speaking of Onesiphorus, says, *he sought him diligently at Rome;* which they apprehend implies, that the apostle was kept under so close a confinement at this time, that few knew where he was to be found; whereas in that imprisonment, of which Luke gives an account in the conclusion of his history, we are told, *He dwelt in a hired house, receiving all that came to him;* (Acts xxviii. 30.) But the strongest argument in support of this opinion, is drawn from chap. iv. 6. *I am now just ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* From whence it has been inferred, that Paul, when he wrote this, was in immediate expectation of death, in consequence of Nero's menaces, or of some express revelation from Christ; (which some have thought Peter also had a little before his martyrdom, 2 Pet. i. 14.) Yet the directions he afterwards gives, plainly shew he had some expectations of living a while longer. Else it is difficult to say why he should so much urge Timothy to *give diligence to come to him*, (ver. 21.) or press his care of the *cloak*, *books*, and *parchments*, mentioned ver. 13. Though, after all, these words must, I think, express an apprehension that his life and ministry were drawing towards a close: which is yet farther confirmed by observing, that whereas in his former imprisonment the apostle had often expressed his persuasion of being released and seeing his Christian friends again, he gives no hint in this epistle of any such expectation, but seems to intimate the contrary, ver. 18. by expressing his confidence, not that he should be again rescued from his enemy as he had been upon making his first apology, but that God would *deliver him from every evil work*, and *preserve him to his heavenly kingdom.* —Upon the whole therefore, I conclude, that this epistle was written some time towards the close of Paul's second imprisonment, and consequently about the year of our Lord 66 or 67; and in the 13th of the emperor Nero. (See Family Expositor, Vol. III. sect. 60, note,[s] p. 401.)

The apostle seems to have intended in this epistle, to prepare Timothy for those sufferings to which he foresaw he would be exposed; to forewarn him of the fatal apostasy and declension that was beginning to appear in the church; and at the same time to animate him, from his own example and the great motives of Christianity, to the most vigorous and resolute discharge of every part of the ministerial office.

In pursuance of this general design, the apostle, after his usual salutation, begins with assuring Timothy of his most affectionate remembrance, and his earnest desire to see him, expressing his satisfaction in those marks of sincere faith, which appeared in him, as well as in his pious ancestors. He then takes occasion, from his own suffering, to excite him to a becoming fortitude and resolution in the Christian cause; and represents in a strong light the excellence of that gospel which he was appointed to preach, and on which he placed an entire dependence, chap. i. 1—12. The apostle, being firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had so often inculcated upon his beloved pupil, exhorts him strenuously to retain them in the midst of all discouragements and opposition, and to go through the duties of his ministerial work with the utmost diligence and constancy, in dependence on the grace of God: mentioning at the same time the treachery of several Asiatics, and acknowledging with the warmest gratitude, the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus, ver 13. Chap. ii. 1—7. And, in order yet more effectually to fortify Timothy against the difficulties he might be called to encounter, he lays open the motives and hopes by which he himself was supported under the sufferings he bore in defence of the gospel; assuring him, that those who suffered with Christ should also be glorified with him. To this he adds some directions in relation to his ministry; advising him in particular, to avoid and discourage all those empty harangues and idle controversies which only served to confound the mind, and by which some had been seduced from the purity of the Christian faith, ver. 8—18. The apostle then takes oc-

casion, from a general view of the great design and tendency of the gospel, to urge the necessity of holiness in all Christians, and especially in ministers; and recommends to the latter the utmost gentleness and meekness, in their attempts to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen, ver. 19, to the end.—And, to make him more sensible of the importance of exerting himself, in order to maintain the purity and honour of religion, he assures him, that a great declension and apostasy was to prevail in the Christian world; and that false teachers were rising up in it, by whose wicked artifices many weak persons were deceived and led astray; reminding him at the same time of that patience and fortitude which he had seen him discover amidst the severest persecutions; chap. iii. 1—13. To guard Timothy against these seducers, and to preserve the church from their fatal influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures as of the utmost importance to all the purposes of Christian edification; and charges him in a solemn manner, to use the utmost diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; declaring at the same time, for his encouragement, the satisfaction with which he reflected on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth, ver. 14. Chap. iv. 1—8. The apostle concludes this epistle, with requesting Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, in order to assist and comfort him under the unworthy treatment he had met with from some of his Christian brethren; giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and, having expressed his cheerful confidence that he should be safely conducted to the presence of his Lord, he adds some particular salutations, and closes with his usual benediction, ver. 9, to the end of the epistle.

Whoever reads over this epistle with that attention it deserves, and considers the circumstance in which it was written, will be sensible that it affords a very strong argument in favour of Christianity.—The apostle had been for some time under close confinement at Rome, at the

mercy of a cruel and capricious tyrant. He had seen himself deserted by his friends in his greatest extremity; and had nothing before him, but the certain prospect of being called to suffer death in the same cause to which he had devoted his life.—In this situation how does he behave? Does he seem to look back with concern on his past conduct, or to regret the sacrifice he had made of all his worldly interests? Can we discover any thing, that betrays a secret consciousness of guilt, or even a suspicion of the weakness of his cause? Nay, does he drop a single expression that can be interpreted as a mark of fear, or discomposure of mind, in the apprehension of those gloomy scenes that lay before him?—Surely if he had been an impostor, or had entertained the least doubt of the doctrines he taught, something of this kind must have escaped him when writing to so intimate a friend, with whom he could intrust all the secrets of his breast. —On the contrary, upon the most calm and deliberate survey, he expresses an entire satisfaction in reflecting on the part he had acted; and earnestly recommends it to his beloved pupil, to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause, even at the hazard of his life. He appears throughout his epistle, to have felt a strong inward conviction of the truth of those principles he had embraced, and glories in the sufferings he endured in support of them; triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Master, and of receiving at his hands a crown of distinguished lustre. A behaviour like this, in one who had so considerable a share in establishing the Christian religion, and expected in a short time to seal his testimony to it with his blood, must be allowed a strong confirmation of the truth of those facts on which our faith depends. It is at least a convincing proof, that the apostle was himself sincere in what he professed to believe: and when the several circumstances of his history are considered and impartially weighed, it will appear as evident, that he could not possibly be deceived, and consequently that his testimony is to be admitted in its full force.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

SECT. I.

The apostle begins his epistle, after proper salutations, with expressions of his affection to Timothy, and general acknowledgments of his joy in, and dependence upon, the grace of that gospel which he was employed to preach. 2 Tim. I. 1—12.

2 TIMOTHY I. 1.

2 TIM. I. 1. PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy *my* dearly beloved son:

I *PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*, whose eternal counsels, with reference to me, were manifested in that wonderful manner in which I was set apart for the service of the gospel, *agreeably to the promise of* eternal *life*, which is given us *in Christ Jesus*, and by which I am animated in all my labours and sufferings,) Send this second epistle *to Timothy, my beloved son*; whose humble and faithful services in the gospel I have so long proved, and whom I love with the affection of a father. Nor can I express this affection better, than by wishing, as I most sincerely do, that *grace*,

SECT. I. 2 Tim. I. 1. 2

SECT. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 2.

mercy, and *peace*, may attend thee, *from God, the* gracious and merciful *Father* of all true believers, *and from Christ Jesus*, his Son and *our Lord*, who is also our Peace.

grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 *I give thanks unto* this blessed *God, whom I serve, after* the example of [*my*] pious *progenitors, with a pure conscience, that*, through his goodness, laying the case upon my heart, *I am incessantly mindful of thee in my prayers night and day*, so that I scarce ever rise up in the morning, or lie down in the evening, without allowing thee a share in my devout remembrance; 4 *Desiring earnestly to see thee, as I am mindful of thy tears*, which flowed so plentifully at our last separation, *that I might be filled with joy*, in an interview with so dear and 5 amiable a friend. And indeed thou hast, as it were, an hereditary title to my regard, *as I* also *keep in remembrance the undissembled faith which is in thee*, and *which first dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice*, who believed in Christ before thee, and have been happily instrumental in communicating to thy heart those good impressions, which they felt in their own; *and I am persuaded that* [*it is*] *in thee too*, and that thou still retainest it in 6 the midst of all opposition: *For which cause*, *I* am the more encouraged to *remind thee of stirring up the gift of God*,[a] *which is in thee by the imposition of my hands*;[b] whereby those miraculous communications of the Spirit were imparted to thee, which it will be thy duty to cherish, by frequently engaging in those devotional exercises and active services for 7 which they are intended to qualify thee. Exert thyself therefore with cheerfulness and boldness, without dreading any opposition that may arise; *for God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice*, and fear, *but of courage and of love, and of wisdom*;[c] and if we conduct our-

3 I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy:

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

[a] *Stirring up the gift.*] Ἀναζωπυρεῖν. The metaphor is plainly borrowed from stirring up fire when it is almost extinct; and some have imagined it might refer to that part of the priests office which consisted in trimming the lamps in the temple, and supplying them with oil in order to keep them continually burning. (See Raphel. e Polyb. in loc.) while others have thought it alludes to the form of flames in which the Spirit descended. Acts ii. 3. See 1 Thess. v. 19, and note there. Compare Gen. xlv. 27. Septuag.

[b] *Imposition of my hands.*] See the note on 1 Tim. iv. 14.

[c] *God hath not given us, &c.*] Perhaps Paul added this under an apprehension, that the tender spirit of Timothy

SECT. I.

2 Tim. I. 7.

selves prudently, under the influences of a spirit of universal love, we may hope that his Spirit will work mightily in us, to fit us for those services which his providence may point out.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God;

Be not therefore ashamed of that sacred truth, 8 which is *the testimony of our Lord*, taught by his mouth, confirmed by his death and resurrection, and the descent of his Spirit; *nor of me*, who am now *his prisoner; but* resolutely own thy regard to me, and *take thy share in the afflictions* which may lie in thy way, while bearing a courageous testimony to the truth *of the gospel, according to the* evidence derived to it from the miraculous

9 Who hath saved us and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

power of God; Who hath saved us from that 9 ruin into which the world hath fallen by its fatal apostasy, *and* hath *called* [*us*] out from the rest of mankind *by an holy calling, not according to* any distinguished merit of *our* own *works, but according to his own purpose, and* those rich overflowings of *grace given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages*,[d] as he was appointed, in the everlasting and immutable counsels of God, to

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel:

be a Redeemer and a Saviour unto us. *But* this 10 long concealed grace *is now made manifest by the* illustrious *appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who*, by what he has done and suffered in human flesh for the salvation of his faithful servants, *hath* in effect *abolished death*, has deposed it from its tyrannical empire, *and thrown a light on* the important doctrine of *life and immortality by the gospel*;[e] which gives us a more

might have been something terrified by the prospect of persecution.

[d] *Given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages.*] I see no reason for rendering it, as Dr. Whitby would do, *according to his purpose before all ages, and the grace given us in Christ Jesus*. The grace might be said to be given us in Christ, as the Father stipulated with him, through his hand, as well as for his sake, to give us that grace which we do actually receive.

[e] *Thrown a light upon life and immortality.*] *Life* and *immortality* is put by a usual Hebraism for *immortal life*, as Archbishop Tillotson well observes, (Vol. III. p. 112.) in his discourse on these words; in which he has shewn, how uncertain the heathens were as to the doctrines of a future state of retribution, and the comparative obscurity of that *light* in which it was placed under the Old Testament. The former article is much illustrated by Dr. Whitby's learned and excellent note. But what Mr. Warburton has written upon this subject, in his Divine Legation, Vol. I. and what is said upon it, in the last edition of the critical inquiry into the opinions of the ancient philosophers, has done abundantly more than any thing else to vindicate the propriety of this expression: and I must refer to these learned and ingenious writers for the most satisfactory commentary on these words of the apostle.—But the learned and pious Dr. Hodges (who, so far as I can judge, has given us a greater variety of new and plausible interpretations of scripture than any other divine in the *Hutchinsonian*

SECT. 1.

express assurance and more lively view of it than any former dispensation had ever done, or could possibly do. This is that important message of God to men, for the proclamation and confirmation *of which I was appointed an herald and apostle, and* particularly had it in my charge, while others were more immediately sent to the circumcision, to be myself *a teacher of the Gentiles: For which cause also I suffer these* hard *things*, which press me in this state of confinement: *but*, though my condition may seem infamous, *I am not ashamed* of these bonds, or any of the reproaches and insults with which they are attended; *for I know to whom I have trusted* all my most important concerns, *and am* fully *persuaded, that he is* well *able to keep that* precious immortal soul *which I have deposited with him*, even *unto that* great and important *day* when the promised salvation shall be completed.[f]

2 Tim. 1. 11.

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

IMPROVEMENT.

Verse 8, 9

WHO, that attentively considers the *holy calling* with which *we are called, according to the grace given us in Christ Jesus*, can endure the thought of being ashamed of Christ's gospel, or any of his servants, to whatever difficulties they may be exposed, with whatever infamy they may be loaded? For ever adored be that Prince of life, who hath deposed death from his throne; who

scheme) contends, that the word ἀφθαρσία ever ought to be rendered *incorruption*, and that Christ himself is to be understood both by *life* and *incorruption*; so that the text must refer to his throwing light on Psal. xvi. 10, 11, and on other scriptures, where it was foretold that the Messiah should be the *light of the world*, and bestow *incorruptible life* upon others, by raising himself from the grave before he was corrupted there. But if any should still think this expression refers to the future state, to which Dr. Hodges apprehends it has no regard, he would have him consider it as applicable to the Gentiles only; on which account he supposes the apostle presently speaks of his being *appointed as their teacher*, ver. 11. This violent interpretation (for such on the whole it appear to me,) is intended to obviate the objection which arises from this text, against several new criticisms, by which this ingenious writer would find reference to a future state and the resurrection in passages of the Old Testament, in which they were never before thought of. See Dr. Hodges's Elihu, p. 251, 252.

[f] *That which I have deposited with him.*] Philo and Josephus have many passages (several of them collected by Dr. Whitby, in his note on this text,) in which both the *soul* and the *law* are in different views called παραθῆκαι, *the depositum of God*. The soul, as it is said, is to be returned into the hands of God, and committed to his care at death, and this, they tell us, may be done more cheerfully, in proportion to the degree in which care has been taken to maintain the honour of his law with due fidelity. There is to be sure a similarity of sentiment with regard to the gospel, but Paul might have used this expression, without borrowing the hint from any Jewish writer whatever.

hath enlightened, by rays reflected from his own beautiful and resplendent countenance, the regions of the invisible world, over which so dark a veil had before been spread! Let our eyes be fixed more and more on this illustrious Object, and, confiding in the power and grace of Christ, let us all immediately and daily commit to him that invaluable jewel of an immortal soul which God hath given us. We may surely survey it with a mixture of delight and terror, till we have thus provided for its safety; and then may that terror be allowed to disappear, and give place to a rational delight, and we may justly congratulate ourselves while we adore our Saviour. SECT. I. Ver. 16

Let the proclamation of this gospel be most welcome to us, and let us call up all the strength and vigour of our souls to assert and advance it; for *God hath given us the spirit, not of fear, but of courage, sobriety, and charity.* Whatever gifts we have received, let us stir them up to their proper use, and let one generation of Christians deliver down to another a sense of the excellency of their holy religion. Pious women may take encouragement from the success of Lois and Eunice on Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister; as perhaps some of the worthiest and most valuable ministers of the church of Christ has ever been able to boast of, have had reason to bless God for those early impressions which were made upon their mind by the religious instructions of persons in the same relations. 7 6 5

To conclude, let us learn, by the repeated example of the apostle, to be earnest in prayer for our Christian friends; and if we find our hearts excited to remember them in our prayers day and night, let us, with him, return our thanks to God, that he puts such benevolent affections into our hearts; for every good disposition that springs up there, is implanted and cherished by him. 3

SECT. II.

The apostle exhorts Timothy strenuously to retain the gospel in the midst of all discouragements and oppositions, and to go through the duties of his ministerial office in dependence upon the grace of God; mentioning the treachery of several Asiatics, and the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus. 2 Tim. I. 13—Chap. II. 7.

1 TIMOTHY I. 13.

1 TIM. I. 13. HOLD fast the form

ENCOURAGED by that confidence which I have been expressing in the power and fidelity of my Lord, to whom I have entrusted the care of my immortal interests and concerns, be

SECT. II.

thou, O Timothy, engaged resolutely to *retain*, and exactly to adhere to *the form of sound words*,[a] that system of divine and everlasting truths *which thou hast heard of me;* keep it, not merely *in* thy memory, but in thine heart, with cordial *faith, and* that sincere, fervent *love, which is* the great badge of our being *in Christ Jesus*, and which will finally secure our being owned

2 Tim. II. 13.

of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 by him as his true disciples. And as thou desirest to have the same cheerful confidence, let it be thy care to *keep that good thing which is deposited with thee*,[b] even the gospel of Christ lodged in thine hands: assert its honours, *by the* aids of the *Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us*, and which will, I trust, enable thee to act with that integrity and zeal which so arduous and important a service requires.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 *Thou knowest this, that all those of Asia*,[c] who are at Rome, and were known to me by a profession of Christianity, *are turned from me*, and have proved treacherous friends, after all their forward pretences; *of which number are Phygellus and Hermogenes*,[d] whom it is with great concern that I am obliged particularly to point

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 out on such an occasion. But it is with proportionable pleasure that I mention another person, of a very different character, whose affection and zeal was illustrated by their baseness and disingenuity. *May the Lord grant* his *mercy* to his family! I mean *to the household of Onesiphorus; for he hath often refreshed me*, both by his visits and liberalities, *and hath not been ashamed of my chain*, (Eph. vi. 20;) but has rather

18 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

[a] *Form of sound words.*] Archbishop Tillotson explains this, of that profession of faith which was made by Christians at their baptism, (Works, Vol. II. p. 38;) and the author of Miscellanea Sacra observes, that it is not said that Timothy received this form by immediate inspiration, but heard it of Paul, as, according to him, *the word of wisdom* was given only to the apostles. Chap. ii. 2; iii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

[b] *That good thing which is deposited.*] See the note on ver. 12.

[c] *Those in Asia*, &c.] The Asiatics were infamous for their cowardice and effeminacy. Paul probably alludes to their behaviour at Rome, (chap. iv. 16,) of which Timothy might have been informed by travellers. But Dr. Whitby refers this to those of Ephesus who had deserted the apostle, giving ear, as he supposes, to the seduction of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, by whom he had been represented as a despiser of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, I prefer the former interpretation, as evidently more natural.

[d] *Phygellus and Hermogenes.*] Probably he mentions these two persons as known to Timothy, or as having distinguished themselves by their profession, so that there was particular reason to expect a different conduct from them.

esteemed it his honour to own me, while I was under disgrace and persecution in so good a cause. *But being* here *in Rome, he sought me out* so much the *more diligently* on that very account, *and,* when he had *found* [*me*], took every opportunity of expressing his unfeigned love and veneration for a servant and apostle of Christ in such a circumstance. *The Lord grant unto him that,* after having enjoyed all the blessings of a long and useful life, *he may find mercy of the Lord in that* great *day,* to which our eyes and hopes, as Christians, are continually directed. *And on how many occasions he ministered* [*to me*] *in Ephesus, thou very well knowest,* as thou wert an eye-witness to it, while we were together there.

SECT. II.

2 Tim. II. 17.

17 But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found *me.*

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

II. 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Thou therefore, my dearly beloved *son* Timothy, animated by such an example of fidelity and courage, *be strong, in* humble and continual dependence upon *the grace which is in Christ Jesus,* and resolve never to be ashamed of any of his faithful servants under disgrace and difficulties, while adhering to his cause. *And the things which thou hast heard from me,* and which I have solemnly testified again and again, *before many witnesses,* in one place and another, *these commit thou* with all diligence and care *to faithful men*[c], *who may be able also to teach others;* that so there may be, throughout all ages, a succession of such, who shall deliver them down from one to another, even till the end of time, according to God's gracious purposes in revealing them to us. And especially do *thou* see to it thyself, that thine own temper and conduct be such as may engage them to fidelity in bearing their testimony. *Therefore,* as thy lot is cast in a time when we are called to suffer so many severe things for the truth, prepare thyself steadily and resolutely to *endure afflictions* and hardships, *as* it becomes *a good soldier of Jesus Christ,* and one whom he hath honoured with a distinguished rank in his army, that thou mayest marshal and lead on others. And, to

II. 1

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that

[c] *Commit to faithful men.*] This is quoted by many, as an argument that the *people* were not left to choose their own ministers. But if they did choose them, or propose them to Timothy, it might yet be his appropriate office to *admit* them to the ministry, and solemnly to *commit* the gospel to them. Compare the note on Tit. i 5.

SECT. II.

pursue the metaphor, remember, that *no one who goes out to war, entangles himself with secular affairs*, but relinquishes every other calling and employment, *that he may please him under whom he is inlisted*, and be ready to receive and execute his commands. Accordingly keep thyself as much as possible disengaged from worldly business, and from every thing which might tend to take off thy thoughts from thy great work, and render thee less active in thy sacred warfare. *And* thou *also* knowest, that *if any one wrestles*, or contends in any other of those games for which Greece is so celebrated, if he do gain an advantage over his antagonist, *he is not crowned unless he wrestle*, or perform any other athletic exercise, *according to the law* of the respective contention. So let us take care to learn the rules which Christ has laid down to direct us in our attempts, and act according to them. And be not impatient, though the expected and promised reward should be long delayed; for thou well knowest, that *the husbandman must first labour*, and wait while the harvest is growing, through succeeding weeks and months, [*and then*] *partake of the fruits* produced by his toils[f].

2 Tim. II. 4. warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth, must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 *Consider the things which I say* as matters of high importance, in which thou art intimately concerned: *and may the Lord give thee* a good *understanding in all things*, and enable thee to act in a manner suitable to the instructions thou hast received.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. II. 1. LET us all be exhorted to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, and, in humble dependence upon it, let us go forth cheerfully to our work and warfare as Christians. This is a strength so great, and communicated with so rich a freedom, that the Christian minister, under his peculiar difficulties, will find it adequate to them all. Let such particularly apply to themselves the exhortations and consolations which are here given or

[f] *Must first labour.*] It was entirely to the apostle's purpose to remind Timothy that the *labour* of the *husbandman* must *precede* the *harvest*; but whether he was to receive these fruits *first* was not the point in question. We must therefore acquiesce in this transposition, and the like is necessary in several other places. See Heb. viii. 4, in the original. See Vol. II. p. 314, note[f].

suggested. Let them strenuously *retain the form of sound words*, which the inspired apostles have delivered, *with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* To this orthodoxy of principle, which a due regard to this great and only standard will teach them, let them add orthodoxy of temper. And, as they desire that Christ may keep what they profess to have deposited with him, let them faithfully keep what he has lodged in their hands. And may the Holy Spirit dwell in them, to make them faithful in all, and direct them in their efforts to defend the gospel, to spread its influence on the hearts of men, and transmit it from one generation to another; lodging it with faithful men, who may teach others, when their teachers and fathers in Christ shall rest from their labours. Such a succession may God continue in his churches; and may he prosper the work of those who are employed in humble and faithful attempts to promote so good a cause, by forming for this important charge, those who, like Timothy, have early known the scripture, and felt its power on their hearts.

SECT. II. Chap. I. 13, 14. Chap. ii. 2.

Let such as are setting out in this holy warfare, remember the caution which the apostle gives. May they not unnecessarily encumber themselves with secular cares, which would render them less fit to please the great General under whose banner they are inlisted. Let them strive lawfully, if they hope for the crown, and, cultivating the ground with diligence, let them wait with patience, if they desire at length to reap that blessed harvest. Nor let that general apostasy from the power of religion, which is the shame of the present day, deter them; but rather let it whet their pious zeal to own, with more strenuous attachment, the cause of Christ and of his faithful servants. And, when they have done all, may they ever retain an humble sense of their dependence on the Divine mercy: and the Lord grant to us all, ministers and people, that we may find it in that great day!

4

SECT. III.

Paul further animates Timothy to fidelity, by laying open the motives and hopes which supported him under the difficulties he bore in the defence of the gospel; interspersing several addresses relating to that purity, prudence, and meekness, with which he should endeavour to conduct himself in the ministry. 2 Tim. II. 8—18.

2 TIMOTHY II. 8.

2 TIM. II. 8. REMEMBER that TO animate thee, O Timothy, to all the labours and all the sufferings of the Christian

SECT. III.

and ministerial life, *remember Jesus Christ*, the promised Messiah *of the seed of David*, the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, *who* after having spent and laid down his life in the prosecution of his great work, *was raised from the dead*[a], and at length exalted to the right-hand of God, there to receive the reward of all his labours and sufferings, *according to* the tenor of *my gospel*, which, as thou well knowest, I every where preach and attest. *In* the service of *which*[b] *I suffer evil*, [*even*] *to bonds*; the chief magistrates of my country sentencing me to confinement, after the many insults which have been offered me by the dregs of the people, *as* if I were *a malefactor* worthy of some heavy punishment; *but* my great comfort is, that *the word of God is not bound*. I rejoice, that many of my brethren are at liberty to preach it publicly, and am thankful for every opportunity of bearing my testimony to so good a cause, in such a private manner as my present circumstances may admit; well knowing, that God can bless even these limited attempts, to what degree he shall in his infinite wisdom see fit. (Compare Phil. i. 12.) *On this account I* cheerfully *endure all* these *things*, and whatever else Providence may appoint, *for the sake of the elect*; *that* the gracious purposes of God for their happiness may be effected, and *they may obtain* that complete *salvation which is in Christ Jesus*, and which shall be attended *with eternal*, as well as illustrious and exalted *glory*. [*It is*] *a faithful word*[c] which I have often insisted upon, and it shall undoubtedly be veri-

2 Tim. II. 8.

Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.

9 Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

11 *It is* a faithful

[a] *Remember Christ who was raised from the dead*] Our translators render it, *Remember that he was raised*; as if he had said, Adhere to this as the great foundation of the gospel. But though this be undoubtedly true, the apostle's thought seems rather more lively: remember Him who was thus raised from the dead, and that will be instead of a thousand arguments to bear thee through all thy difficulties.

[b] *In the service of which.*] Dr. Whitby has shewn, in his note on this clause, that ὡ sometimes signifies *in which cause*, or *for the sake of which*.

[c] *It is a faithful word.*] Some refer this to the concluding clause of the former verse; but it seems much more reasonable to connect it with what follows, as, generally speaking, this phrase is introductory to the weighty sentence it is intended to confirm. See 1 Tim. i. 15; iv. 8, 9. Though Tit. iii. 8. seems an exception. Dr. Tillotson thinks this was a *celebrated saying* among Christians, which was either derived by tradition from Christ or some of the apostles, and it had so powerful a tendency to keep them steady to their religion, that it is no wonder it was in frequent use. Tillot. Vol. II. p. 175, 176.

saying, For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him:*

fied; *that if we* have the resolution to *die with* SECT. III. *him*, even with that blessed Saviour, according to the obligation of our baptismal vow, *we shall also live with him*, in that everlasting happiness which he hath prepared for all his people. *If* 2 Tim. II. 11. 12

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him:* if we deny *him*, he also will deny us:

we patiently *endure* our part in his afflictions, *we shall also* share his triumph, and *reign with him* in his celestial kingdom. But on the other hand, *if we* are intimidated with these transitory evils, so as to desert his cause, and *deny* [*him*] before men, *he will also*, as he hath expressly threatened, *deny us* in the great day, before his Father and his holy angels. *If we are un-* 13

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

faithful,[d] and false to our engagements, *he abideth faithful*, and will steadily adhere to those rules of judgment and distribution which he hath so solemnly laid down in his word, (compare Mat. x. 33.) for we may be sure *he cannot deny himself*, by frustrating his own public declaration. It becomes us therefore to weigh the tenor of them with all seriousness, and humbly to acquiesce in his terms, since it is impossible he should be brought to change them in favour of ours.

14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

Remind [*them*] *of these things*, as thou art 14 engaged to sacrifice every other view to the great prospect of approving thy fidelity to such a Master. And for this purpose, *testify*, as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence,[e] to those over whom thou art called to preside, *that men do not contend* and quarrel *about words*, an evil to [*which*] they are so obnoxious: for such a contention [*is*] *altogether unprofitable*, [*and even tends*] *to the subversion of the hearers*, taking off their attention from true religion, and filling their minds with pride and passion, and numberless other disorders and vices.

[d] *If we are unfaithful.*] So I think ἀπιστοῦμεν should be rendered, as it stands opposed to πιστὸς; and so the *words* will farther imply, that whatever we lose by our unfaithfulness, in whatever degree it appears, it is no argument of any unfaithfulness *in him;* as his promises are made to *faithful* servants, and fair warning is given to persons of a different character.

[e] *Testify* as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence.] There is a most *awful solemnity* in this charge, which plainly shews the great folly and mischief of striving about little controversies; and I pray God, to affect the heart of his ministers with a deeper sense of this, before the interests of vital religion among us be utterly undone by our severe contentions; or, as the excellent Archbishop Leighton expresses it in his lively manner, "What we profess to hold so *sacred*, "be itself torn in pieces, while we are "struggling about its *fringes*."

SECT. III.

2 Tim. II. 15.

Diligently endeavour, whenever thou comest *to present thyself before God*, in any of the duties of thine office, that, whatever men may judge of thee and thy services, thou mayest be *approved* by him, as *a workman who hath no cause to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*,[f] distributing with prudence, as well as
16 fidelity, to each his proper share *But avoid*, and stand at a distance from, those *profane and empty declamations*, with which some who affect to be thought of importance in the Christian church, are ready to amuse themselves: *for* though the evil of some of them may not immediately appear, and they may seem trifling rather than mischievous, *they will* at length *advance unto more impiety*; and when Satan has prevailed upon men once to quit the right way, he will be continually gaining greater advan-
17 tages over them. *And their discourse will eat like a gangrene*, spreading itself farther and farther, till the whole body is infected, and even destroyed by it. Such teachers there are now in the church; *of which* [*number*] in par-
18 ticular, *are Hymeneus and Philetus, Who have erred with respect to the truth*, so as to be wide of the mark. For they have, by their allegorical interpretations, explained away one of the most fundamental doctrines of our religion, *asserting that the resurrection*, of which it so largely speaks, consists only in a conversion from vice to virtue, and consequently *is already past*,[g] with regard to all true Christians;

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus:

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past al-

[f] *Rightly dividing the word of truth.*] Ορθοτομουντα τον λογον της αληθειας. Some think here is an allusion to what the Jewish priest or Levite did in dissecting the victim, and separating the parts in a proper manner; as some were to be laid on God's altar, and others to be given to those who were to share in the sacrifice. Others think it refers to guiding a plough aright, in order to divide the clods in the most proper and effectual manner, and make straight furrows. But, perhaps, the metaphor may be taken from the distribution made by a steward, in delivering out to each person under his care, such things as his office and their necessities required.

[g] *Asserting that the resurrection is—past.*] Vice, as my learned friend Mr. Warburton with great propriety observes, in reference to the text, was in the philosophical schools called *death*. And, upon the same principle, a recovery to a virtuous course and temper, might be called a kind of *resurrection* from the dead. But nothing can be more evident than that this was by no means the resurrection which Christianity taught. Yet, as there is nothing too absurd for some who pride themselves in their philosophy to believe, this foolish refinement found its followers among some pretended Christians of this stamp. Warb. Div. Leg. Vol. I. p. 435.

ready; and overthrow the faith of some.

and so they *subvert the faith of some*, who are less established in the doctrines of the gospel, and endanger their salvation. It will therefore become thee, amidst all the candour which I have so often inculcated, to guard against such tenets, and the authors of them.

SECT. III.

2 Tim. ii. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is not perhaps a single precept in the whole sacred volume, which would be more extensively useful to ministers, or to private Christians, than this of the apostle, taken in all its extent. *Remember Jesus Christ.* Many a sweet memorial hath he left us of himself. Often, very often, have we been called solemnly to survey them, and yet how ready are we to forget him, and by a natural consequence to forget ourselves, our duty and interest on the one hand, and our danger on the other. "Blessed *Jesus!* may we daily and hourly remember thee! that thou "hast *died*, that thou art *raised from the dead*, and that thou art "ever near thy people, to protect, to comfort, and to bless them. "If, for thy cause, we should be called to *suffer evil as evil doers*, "whether in our persons or reputations, may we not be discouraged, but rather rejoice in the honour thou doest us in appointing for us such a conformity to thyself! The enemies of thy "gospel may indeed oppose it, they may *bind* its most faithful "preachers, but their opposition, their persecution, is *vain*." *The word of God is not bound*; and Divine grace, operating by it, will sooner or later give it the intended, the promised triumph; that his *elect may obtain salvation by Jesus Christ*, and may not only escape the condemnation and ruin of the impenitent world, but may finally be crowned with eternal glory.

Ver. 8. 9 10

May we ever be mindful of this faithful word, that if we suffer with Christ we shall reign with him too; and may we endure the greatest hardships to which we can be called out, as considering that our sufferings are momentary, but our reign will be eternal. Never may we, for any allurement or terror, deny him, as we would not finally be denied by him; when no other honour will remain but that which he confers, no other happiness but that which he bestows.

11, 12 13

In the mean time, as we desire the prosperity of his kingdom, let us earnestly pray, that he will raise up to his church a multitude of faithful ministers, who may govern themselves by these truly apostolical canons; ministers who may not contend about words in a manner unprofitable and vain, who may not amuse their hearers with empty harangues about insignificant curiosities or perplexing subtilties; but may, in the integrity of their

14

SECT. III. hearts endeavour to approve themselves to God, as workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. And may divine grace preserve the church from those seducing teachers, whose doctrine, like a secret gangrene, might spread itself to the destruction of the body, so that the faith of many might be overthrown.

Ver. 15. 17, 18

SECT. IV.

The apostle urges the necessity of holiness in all Christians, but especially in ministers; and of meekness in their endeavours to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen. 2 Tim. II. 19, *to the end.*

2 TIMOTHY II. 19.

SECT. IV. IN order to excite thee, O Timothy, to contend earnestly for the great doctrines of the gospel, I have taken notice of the manner in which some have revolted from them. And it is matter of mournful reflection, that there should be such instances of apostasy in this early age of the church. *Nevertheless*, we recollect with pleasure that, whatever defections there may be in particular persons, *the* great *foundation* Stone, which the mercy and faithfulness *of God* has laid for the support and comfort of his people, *standeth firm* and stedfast, *having*, as it were, *this* double seal or *inscription*:[a] on the one hand, *The Lord knoweth them that are his own*, and as he surely distinguishes them in every circumstance, so he bears a steady and constant favour to them, nor can any alienate them from his gracious regards; *and*, on the other side, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ*, every one that professes his religion, and pretends the least regard to him, *depart from ini-*

2 Tim. II. 19.

2 TIM. II. 19. NEVERTHELESS, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

[a] *Inscription.*] Many critics have justly observed, that the word σφραγις often signifies an *inscription*, or the *mark* made by a *seal*, as well as the *seal* itself. See Rev. ix. 4. And the expression is here used with peculiar propriety, in allusion to the custom of engraving upon some stones laid in the foundation of buildings the name of the persons by whom, and the purposes for which the structure is raised. And nothing can have a greater tendency to encourage the hope, and at the same time to engage the obedience of Christians, than this *double* inscription. Dr. Whitby supposes that clause, *the Lord knoweth them that are his own*, has a peculiar reference to the apostles, in opposition to heretical teachers, and that it alludes to Numb. xvi. 5, Septuag. That to *knows* often signifies to *regard with favour*, as well as to *distinguish*, hath been shewn elsewhere. Rom. viii. 27.

quity; let him stand off, and keep at the greatest distance from every kind and degree of immorality, from every appearance and occasion of sin. But, though our obligations to such a conduct be so many and so great, we cannot flatter ourselves that all professing Christians will be sensible of them. *For in a great house there are vessels, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, the former* being intended *for honourable, the other for* meaner and *dishonourable uses:* and accordingly, there will be, in the church of God, persons of different characters, who will meet with very different treatment. *If therefore any one cleanse himself from these,* if he be careful to avoid the society of persons who have revolted from true religion, and made themselves instruments of impurity and iniquity, *he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and useful to the* immediate and personal service of his great *Lord* and Master; and such an one will be constantly *ready,* as the nobler vessels of a house, *to every good work,* which will be the surest test of our real goodness. *But flee from* all occasions of exciting or gratifying *the passions of youth;* whether on the one hand, the love of sensual pleasure, or, on the other, rashness, contention, pride, and vainglory,[b] to which young persons are peculiarly obnoxious: for these will render thee unfit for the honour of being used by thy Lord for the purposes of his glory and the edification of his church. *And* therefore, instead of making provision for these, *pursue,* with the greatest ardour and intenseness of mind, *righteousness* and *fidelity, love* and *peace;* cultivate an upright, benevolent, candid temper, *towards* all, and especially towards *those that invoke* the name of *the Lord* Jesus Christ *out of a pure heart,* so far as the conduct can discover the inward temper. *But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that,* how curious soever they appear, *they*

2 Tim. II. 20.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood, and of earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that

[b] Rashness, contention, &c.] These are *youthful passions,* of the danger of which, some heady young men, who may value themselves for their freedom from other scandals, seem to think but little; yet it is plain from the opposition between this and the latter part of the verse, they were particularly in Paul's mind when he gave this caution.

SECT. IV.

only tend to *beget strifes* and contentions in the church; and I reckon it a most important part of the learning of a Christian minister to guard against such occasions of offence and mischief.

2 Tim. II. 23.

they do gender strifes.

24 Let the bigotted Jews, and the vain-glorious heathens, on each side, split into ever so many different sects and parties, and dispute as eagerly about such things as they will; *but the servant of the Lord*, the Christian, and especially the minister, *must not strive* in an angry and hostile manner, *but be* mild and *gentle towards all, ready to teach* the ignorant, and, instead of hurting [*and*] injuring any, be willing *to endure evil* from those who, instead of receiving his doctrine, repay his kindness with outrage.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient;

25 *In meekness instructing opposers, if by any means God may* perhaps, in his own due time, conquer their savage prejudices, and *give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth;* of which, through the riches of Divine grace, we see some instances, even where there had been a long and inveterate struggle against it.

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 *And* surely it will be worth while to try every method on such unhappy souls, *that they may awaken* and recover themselves *out of the snare of the devil, who have* lain sleeping, and as it were intoxicated in it, having *been taken* by that subtile fowler, and, like a living prey, detained *captive by him at his* cruel *pleasure*, while perhaps they have been dreaming of liberty and happiness, in the midst of the most shameful bondage and the extremest danger.[c]

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

[c] *That they may recover*, &c.] In order to understand this beautiful image, it is proper to observe, that the word ἀνανήψωσιν properly signifies, *to awake from a deep sleep*, or from a fit of *intoxication* (see Elsn. Obs. Sac. in loc.) and refers to an artifice of fowlers to scatter seeds impregnated with some drugs intended to lay birds asleep, that they may draw the net over them with the greater security. The interpretation which a late writer has given of these words, who would render them, "*being taken alive by him*," that is, the Christian minister, *for the purposes of the Divine will*," is so unnatural, that merely to compare it with the former is to confute it. (Taylor on Orig. Sin, p. 152. Nor can any thing be more evidently wrong than to maintain, that ζωγρεω necessarily implies a purpose of *preserving*, whereas it only imports *taking a captive*, without determining whether it be for servitude or for death. Compare 2 Chron. XXV. 12, Septuag.

IMPROVEMENT.

How affecting a representation is here made of the wretched state of sinners! they are described as *sleeping in Satan's snare*, like birds in a net, taken alive, and at the fowler's mercy; while they imagine they can spring up whenever they please, and range at full liberty. Alas! they will soon perceive their fatal *captivity:* but they will perceive it too late, if Divine grace do not quickly *awaken* them. Who would not wish to do something for their recovery? Let the ministers of the gospel pity them. Let us pray that God, whose work it is, *would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* Let us try every gentle method which the sincerest compassion can dictate toward affecting so happy a design, and not suffer ourselves to be transported to undue severities of language, or of sentiments, even though we should receive the greatest injuries where we intend the most important kindness. SECT. IV. Verse 26 25 24

Let those that have the honour to bear the most holy character, which any office can devolve on mortal man, avoid, with the greatest care, every thing that would bring a stain, or even a suspicion, upon it. Let them revere the voice of the great apostle, while it animates them to *pursue righteousness* and *faith, love* and *peace, with all* their fellow-Christians of every denomination, with all *that invoke Christ*, and that trust in him. So shall they be vessels of honour, so may they humbly hope that their Lord will condescend to make some special use of them, for the purposes of his own glory, and the salvation of their fellow-creatures. 22 21

To conclude, let ministers and people be daily reading, with all possible care, this double inscription on the foundation of God; and, while we rejoice in the one, let us be admonished by the other. For what is it to us, that *the Lord knows*, distinguishes, and favours *his own*, that his almighty power protects them, and that his infinite mercy will for ever save them, if we are ourselves found among *the wicked, with whom he is angry every day*, among the workers of iniquity, whom he will publicly disown, and to whom he will say, *I know not whence you are.* To name the name of Christ with dispositions like these, will be to injure and profane it; and our profession itself will be interpreted as an act of hostility against him, whom we have presumed so vainly to call the Foundation of our hopes, and the Sovereign of our souls. 19

SECT. V.

Paul cautions Timothy against that great declension and apostasy which was to prevail in the Christian world, and against those false teachers who were rising up in it; reminding him of the example he had seen in him, in the midst of such persecutions as were still to be expected. 2 Tim. III. 1—13.

2 TIMOTHY III. 1.

SECT. V. 2 Tim. III. 1.

IT is the more necessary thus to urge thee to every precaution, and every effort, which may preserve the purity and honour of the Christian church, as, after all we can do for this purpose, such sad scenes are to open in it. We are indeed acquainted with our duty, and we shall find it our own highest account in attending to it. *But this know*, O Timothy, *that in the last days*, under the evangelical dispensation which is to wind up the economy of Providence, and is to remain in full force even to the end of the world, *difficult times* and circumstances *shall arise*, in which it will be hard to discharge our consciences, and at the same time main-
2 tain our safety. *For men shall be lovers of themselves*[a], in the most absurd and excessive degree; *lovers of money*, so as to be impelled to the basest practices by the hopes of obtaining it; *boasters* of what they have, and *proud* pretenders to what they have not; *blasphemers* of God, and revilers of their fellow-creatures: *disobedient to parents*, notwithstanding all the obligations they are under to their care and tenderness; *unthankful*, and ungrate-

2 TIM. III. 1. THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

[a] *Men shall be lovers of themselves*, &c.] Dr. Whitby takes great pains to shew that these characters were applicable to the Jews in the last days of their common-wealth; and supposes the apostle refers to the difficulty of retaining the Christian profession, or acting so as to preserve a safe conscience in it. Many of the lineaments here drawn were, no doubt, to be found in the unbelieving Jews; but, especially considering ver. 5—7. I rather choose to interpret the words as describing some who not only *professed* Christianity, but pretended to *teach* it. And I must beg leave to refer my readers to that very learned and ingenious dissertation of Vitringa (Observ. Sac. lib. iv. cap. 7), in which he attempts to prove that there was a great alteration in the face of the Christian church between the time of Nero and Trajan, within which period, he apprehends great numbers of professors to have departed from the strictness of Christian morals, as well as the purity of the faith. I cannot be satisfied that the supposed predictions of this remarkable event, which he produces from the Old Testament, in his viiith chapter, are so convincing as he thinks them, viz. Isa. xi. 4; xli. 10—14; xliii. 1—3; xlix. 14; l. 10; Mic. vii. 10; Psal. v. 1; xl. 13, 14; lvii. 5; lxxii. 4. His arguments from the New Testament have much greater weight, viz. Mat. xxi. 21, 22; xxiv. 9—13, 22; Acts xx. 29; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; 1 Pet. iv. 16, 17; with the epistle to the Hebrews, the second of Peter, and that of Jude: and I wonder he hath not added this remarkable text to the catalogue.

2 Tim. III. 3.

ful to other benefactors; *unholy*, though they profess themselves devoted to God, and consecrated to his service by the most solemn rites: They will be *destitute of natural affection* even to their own children, as well as of piety toward their parents; *implacable* where enmities have been commenced, and treacherous in their mutual engagements, when there has been a pretence of making them up;[h] *false accusers*, in which they will imitate that diabolical malignity which renders the great enemy of mankind so justly odious; *intemperate* in their pleasures, *fierce* in their resentments, cruel in their revenge; *destitute of all love to goodness*, though it so naturally extorts a tribute of veneration and affection from every human heart which is not sunk into the last degeneracy. They will be *traitors* to those that place the greatest confidence in them, such base traitors, as even to give up their brethren into the hands of persecutors; *heady* and rash in enterprising things, which can only issue in the disturbance of society, or the ruin of those that undertake them. In the mean time, they will be *puffed up with* such *insolence* and self-sufficiency, as to despise any remonstrance which can be made to bring them to a wiser and more decent conduct; and, upon the whole, will prove *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*; who will therefore sacrifice all considerations of religion to the gratification of their appetites. And yet, in the midst of all these enormities, they will still profess themselves Christians, *having a form of godliness*, and observing with exactness the rituals and externals of religion, *but* at the same time *denying* and opposing *the power of it* in their lives, and demonstrating that it has no real influence upon them. *From such* therefore, even from all, in whom thou discernest a temper like that which I have here described, *turn away*; avoid all intimacy with them, lest they should avail themselves of the friendship to which thou

3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

[h] *Implacable* and *treacherous.*] The word ασπονδος certainly takes in *both* ideas, and may be applied to men, who, when once offended, will come into no *treaty* of reconciliation, and also to such as will not think themselves *bound* by such treaties, when they may answer any purposes of their own by the violation of them.

SECT. V.

mightest admit them, as an advantage for doing further mischief; let it therefore evidently appear, that thou givest them no countenance.

2 Tim. III. 6. This temper, as I have intimated before, has begun to appear in many of our contemporaries, *of which* [*number*] *are those* artful deceivers, *who insinuate themselves*[c] *into houses, and* are especially successful in their attempts to *captivate inconsiderable women*, of low rank, and mean understandings, yet easily inflamed with passionate zeal; being indeed, whatever pretences they may make to sanctity, *laden with sins*; and *led aside by various lusts*, which these seducers know how to flatter in such a manner as to make
7 them their own property. These foolish creatures are *always learning*, they pretend to hear with great eagerness, and are charmed with every appearance of novelty and fervour; *but* they are tossed about with every gale of doctrine, and *never able to come to the acknowledgment of the truth*, or to attain any fixed and
8 steady principles. *And* these designing wretches, of whom I have been speaking, seize on such as their proper prey, and just *as Jannes and Jambres*,[d] the Egyptian magicians, *withstood Moses*, when he came to Pharaoh with a message from God, *so do these* men *also withstand the truth* of the gospel. I speak of *persons whose minds are* utterly *corrupted, who with respect to the faith are disapproved*, and worthy of being rejected as enemies to it, and unworthy to know it, though they pretend so much zeal in its de-
9 fence. *But* I foresee, that *they shall not proceed much farther*[e] in these artifices, *for their*

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

[c] *Insinuate themselves*, &c.] This character, as we hinted above, seems rather to suit disaffected and seducing Christian teachers, than infidel Jews, who no doubt carried it with an high hand, and would scorn to think of crouching to the leaders of so contemptible a sect as they called that of the Nazarenes.

[d] *Jannes and Jambres.*] It is remarkable, that the former of these is mentioned together with Moses, by Pliny, and both of them by Numenius the philosopher, quoted in Eusebius, as celebrated magicians. See Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 30, cap. i. and Euseb. lib. 9, cap. 8. It is of no importance to inquire, by what tradition their names came down to so distant an age.

[e] *Shall not proceed much farther.*] Translating it thus, will easily reconcile this with what is afterwards said of their *growing worse and worse*, ver. 13, and of their word, *eating as a gangrene*. Diodate indeed explains this and the 13th verse of *different* persons: this, of some who had already appeared; that, of others who were *soon* to arise. But there seems not the least need of having recourse to such a solution.

folly shall be manifested to all, as theirs also was, when God sent upon the Egyptians plagues, which, far from being able to remove, or mitigate, they could not, as in former instances, so much as imitate. SECT. V. 2 Tim. III. 9.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

But thou hast exactly traced, and been accurately acquainted with, *my doctrine*, and my *conversation*, the steadiness of my aim, *purpose*, and resolution in the cause of God; that firm and uniform *fidelity* which I have always strenuously maintained, without yielding up any the least article of it; my *long-suffering*, when I had been treated in the most injurious manner; my *love* to all, however different in opinion, not excepting even mine enemies and persecutors; and my *patience* under such pressing trials. Particularly under the *persecutions* [and] *sufferings which befel me in* the Pisidian *Antioch* (Acts xiii. 45.) *in Iconium*, (xiv. 2.) *in Lystra*, (xiv. 19.) where thou hast not only heard, but seen, *what persecutions I endured; but the Lord* Jesus, whom I serve, was still with me, and *rescued me out of* them *all*. *Yea, and all who are* resolutely *determined* upon it, *that they will live godly in Christ Jesus*,[1] that they will conduct themselves by the strict rules of piety, which he has prescribed, not turning aside to the right hand or the left, *shall suffer persecution*, or opposition of one kind or another: for Christ has decreed to lead all his people to glory, through a variety of difficulties and hardships. *But wicked men and impostors*, by whatever artifices they may decline persecution, are in a yet more wretched state; for they provoke God to give them up to the lusts of their own heart, and so *will grow* continually *worse and worse*, more obstinate in their opposition to the gospel and its faithful ministers; *deceiving* others indeed by false *and* treacherous pretences, but *being* themselves much more fatally *deceived* by their own corrup-

10

11 Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

11

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

12

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

13

[1] *Live godly in Christ Jesus*, &c.] This, as Dr. Evans justly observes, may import something *peculiar* in the godliness to be exercised by Christians, as being agreeable to the revelation of Christ, animated by his example, dependent on his Spirit for assistance, and his atonement for acceptance with God. Important topics, which all who desire to obtain and promote *godliness*, ought to dwell much upon. See Evans's Christian Temper, Vol. I. p. 192.

SECT. V. tions which delude them with the visionary hope of some temporal advantage, while they are plunging into irrecoverable and everlasting ruin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. MUST we not, on the survey of this scripture, in comparison with what we every day behold in life, cry out, "*Verily these* "*are the last days?*" They are assuredly times of difficulty and 2, 3 peril. Self-love, pride, ingratitude, treachery, intemperance, insolence, the contempt of all authority, human and divine, each, all of these characters may too plainly declare it. But none with more striking evidence than the excessive love of pleasure, on 4 which so many are doting to destruction, while every consideration, both of religion and of prudence, falls at the shrine of this favourite idol. Men are *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, more than lovers of their families, yea, though self-interest be in many instances so scandalously pursued, yet more than lovers of themselves; and when they have sacrificed every thing else to their gain, they sacrifice even that gain to luxury. And would to God there was none such, even among those that retain *the form of godliness*, which so many indeed have scornful- 5 ly cast off! But O! how vain the form, where the power of it is thus denied! And how peculiarly scandalous are these characters in those who call themselves teachers of religion! Yet to such they are here originally applied; and their race is not yet extinct.

10 Blessed be God, there are those yet remaining who are the happy reverse of these; ministers, who can appeal to the consciences of men as to their doctrine, their conversation, their resolution, their fidelity, their gentleness, their charity, and their patience. Happy are they, how ill soever they may be treated 11 in the world! Happy would they be, though exposed to all the terrors of persecution which the apostles and their first followers 12 endured! But we are all warned to prepare for some degree of it; and indeed who can wonder if, amidst so many evils, they who will not go on with the multitude, should sometimes be rudely pressed by them; and it may be, in some instances, cast down and trampled under foot. But be it so; *though cast down*, they shall *not be destroyed*. (2 Cor. iv. 9.) A little time will 13 balance all. An hour of eternity will more than balance it. Let us guard against the deceits by which so many suffer. Let us guard, above all, against those deceits which men practise upon themselves, and which by they hurt themselves infinitely more than all their fraud or violence can hurt any who are not accessary to their own undoing.

SECT. VI.

To guard Timothy against those seducing teachers, and to preserve the church from their evil influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures, and great diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; reflecting with pleasure on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth. 2 Tim III. 14.—*to the end.* IV. 1—8.

2 TIMOTHY III. 14.

SECT. VI.

2 Tim. III. 14.

2 TIM. III. 14. BUT continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;

I HAVE mentioned the case of these wretched men, who grow worse and worse, deceiving others and themselves most of all. *But* that thou, O Timothy, mayest effectually avoid them, *continue thou* stedfast *in the things which thou hast learnt* from me, *and hast believed* upon the authority of God speaking in and by me; *knowing from whom thou hast learnt* [*them*,] and what convincing proofs I have given thee, both of my general integrity, and of that extraordinary inspiration by which I teach. *And* knowing also, *that* the oracles of the Old Testament confirm the system of doctrines which I have taught; of which thou must be very sensible, because *from thine infancy*[a] *thou hast known the sacred scriptures*, in which the grand learning of our Jewish nation consists, and *which* are indeed most worthy of being studied by all, as they *are able to make thee*, and all that faithfully admit and follow their guidance, *wise unto* eternal *salvation*; a science infinitely nobler and more important than human literature in its greatest refinements can pretend to teach, and which is to be learned only *through* that *faith which is in Christ Jesus*. For *the whole* *scripture*, received by the Jewish church, [*is*] *divinely inspired*,[b] *and* therefore, as may well be imagined, is *profitable* to the highest purposes.

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* pro-

[a] *From thine infancy.*] Hence it appears, that little children may learn some useful lessons from Scripture, and that they ought to be early initiated into the study of the sacred letters; directly contrary to what the church of Rome teaches.

[b] *The whole scripture* [*is*] *divinely inspired.*] Grotius translates the words, *the whole divinely inspired scripture is profitable*, &c. which they will undoubtedly bear; and as we may be sure that, by *scripture*, the apostle means the books which the Jews received as canonical, that version gives a true sense; but I take this, which is our own, to be more literal.

SECT. VI.

2 Tim. III. 16.

It is fitted *for doctrine*, as it lays down the most fundamental principles of religion in the view it gives us of the Divine nature and perfections, and *for conviction* of those opposite errors, which the licentious and perverse wit of man has invented in so great abundance, and set off with so many plausible arguments. It is also useful *for* the *reproof* of irregularities in practice, which, how speciously soever they may be defended by the sophistry of those that think it their interest to plead for them, quickly fall before the authority of the Divine word. And when men have submitted to it, they will also find it effectual *for instruction in righteousness*, and will be led on from one degree of virtue and piety to another, with a progress which will continually advance in proportion to the regard they pay to that Divine book. To this therefore, I hope thou, O Timothy, and every minister of the gospel, will diligently apply, *that the* furniture of the *man of God may be complete*, and that he may be *thoroughly fitted for every good work* which his holy calling may require. *I charge* [*thee*] *therefore*, considering what I have urged in the former part of this epistle, in the most awful manner, *before* the great and blessed *God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, his only begotten Son, *who shall judge the living and the dead*, and pronounce on them all their final and everlasting doom, *at his* last public glorious *appearance*, when the extent *and* majesty of *his kingdom* shall appear in full display: I charge thee to execute the important trust committed to thee with the strictest fidelity. For this purpose, *preach the word* of God with all possible seriousness and earnestness; *be instant in* the prosecution of that good work, in the stated *season* of religious assemblies, [*and*] *out of* that *season*, when occasional providences may give thee an opportunity; yea, carry it into thy private conversation, in the intervals of thy public labours. Endeavour to *convince* the consciences of men, and to reclaim them from their erroneous principles; *rebuke* them for their irregularities and vices, without fearing the face of any; and *exhort* them to diligence and zeal in the perform-

fitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

IV. 1. I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom:

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, ex-

SECT. VI.

2 Tim. IV. 2.

hort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

ance of their duty, *with all long-suffering*, though thou mayest not immediately see the desired success; *and* enforce these exhortations with all those well-known and important motives which the *doctrine* of the gospel may suggest.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

Seize the present opportunity with all eagerness, *for* I see that *the time will* quickly *come, when they will not endure* good and *wholesome doctrine, but*, thinking themselves above the plainness of moral and practical instruction, *shall* wantonly *heap up to themselves* seducing *teachers*,[c] whose harangues shall be just *according to* the prejudices of *their own lusts, having* nothing else to recommend them, unless it be perhaps a glare of false and affected eloquence, which may gratify the vain curiosity and *itching ears* of their hearers. *And* so unhappily will their minds be disposed, that *they shall turn away* [*their attention*] *from* simple *truth*, of the greatest certainty, on which nothing less than their salvation depends, *and shall be turned aside to* idle *fables*, which they eagerly drink in, under a fond semblance of mystery and obscure science, which they pretend to be veiled in these abstruse and enigmatical forms.

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

But be thou, O Timothy, diligent and *watchful in all things* that may tend to the security of thy charge, and prepare thyself resolutely to *endure adversity*, and to *perform the* full *work of an evangelist*, and fully to *accomplish* all the branches of *thy ministry*.[d] And the rather,

6 For I am now

considering how soon the world will lose what-

[c] *They shall heap up to themselves teachers.*] Mr. Slater, in his Original Draught, &c. p. 126, urges this text, as an argument against allowing to the *people* the choice of *their own* ministers; but that right is by no means in question here. The danger there was of men's hearkening to erroneous and seducing teachers, would, upon every imaginable hypothesis, be a solid argument for Timothy's exerting himself to the utmost, in preaching the word, and endeavouring to guard the churches against errors which might otherwise soon have become fatally prevalent. I must add, that the expression, *heaping up to themselves*, implies, that they should be *desirous* of such, and that they should meet with many of such a character.

[d] *Accomplish thy ministry.*] It surely must be owing to a strong prepossession in favour of Diocesan Episcopacy, that the worthy person I mentioned above could imagine these words contained an argument for it. He explains the words πληροφορησον της διακονιαν σου, as an exhortation to *take upon him the complete office of a bishop*, because Paul himself was ready to quit it; not considering how ill this interpretation agrees with his own supposition, of Timothy's being in the episcopal office when Paul wrote his first epistle to him. Whatever Timothy's office were, the argument which Paul suggests, of the satisfaction he found in the reflection on his own fidelity would be very conclusive.

SECT. VI.

ever advantage it may now receive from my personal labours; *for* I may well conclude, from my age and circumstances, that *I am now*, as it
2 Tim. IV. 6 were, *just ready to be offered*, to be poured out as a libation upon God's altar, *and the time of my departure is near* at hand; the time when I shall be dismissed from this state of confinement, when I shall weigh anchor from these mortal shores, and launch into the ocean of eternity.

ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 And, while I stand on the borders of that awful state, it is with unspeakable pleasure I reflect, that *I have maintained the good combat* against the sharpest opposition, that *I have finished* [*my*] *race*, though it has been so arduous, that *I have kept the* holy *faith* committed to my trust, and, with the strictest fidelity, endeavoured to preserve it free from human additions and corrup-
8 tions. *It remaineth*, [*that*] *a crown of righteousness* and glory *is laid up* in sure reserve *for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge*, who presides in this great exercise, *shall*, with distinguished honour, before the assembled world, *render* and award *to me, in that* illustrious *day*,* upon which our hopes and hearts are set; *and* it is the joy of my soul to think, that he shall *not* assign it *to me alone, but to all them also who love* the thoughts of *his* final *appearance* to the universal judgment, and are, or shall be making a wise and pious preparation for it.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 6.

BEHOLD this blessed man, this prisoner, this martyr of Christ, appearing in his chains, and, in the near views of a violent death, more truly majestic and happy, than Cæsar on his imperial throne! Blessed man indeed; who could look upon the pouring forth of his blood, as the libation of a sacrifice of thanksgiving, on which he could call for the congratulations of his friends, rather than their condolence: who could loosen from these mortal shores, and set sail for eternity with a shout! O may we all be

* *In that day.*] This text will certainly prove, that the great and most glorious reward of faithful Christians is referred to the day of general judgment. But it would be very precarious to argue from hence, that there shall be no *prelibation* and *anticipation* of this happiness in a separate state. And when the many texts which have been so often urged in proof of that *intermediate happiness*, are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which has been drawn from such passages as this.

excited by his example to fight the good fight, to finish our course, to keep the faith, in the view of that crown of righteousness which is not reserved only for Paul, or for ministers and Christians of the first rank, who have been eminent for the most distinguished services, but for all who love Christ's appearance, and whose hearts are thoroughly reconciled to his government! SECT. VI. Verse 7 8

May we therefore be watchful in all things. May we endure every affliction which God shall lay in our way, and fill up with proper services every station in which we are fixed. Let the ministers of Christ attend to this solemn charge, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead, at his appearance and in his kingdom. They are as much concerned in this judgment as Timothy or Paul; their own eternal state is in question, and none can have greater reason than themselves to be impressed with it. Let as many therefore as are called to it by Divine Providence and grace, preach the word with zeal and fervency, as well as fidelity; let them be instant in season, and out of season, with a resolution tempered with gentleness, and supported by firm faith in him, who entrusts them with the message. And let the petulancy of men, which indisposes them to endure sound doctrine, yet makes them need it so much the more, be considered by them as an engagement to greater zeal, rather than an excuse for remissness. 5 1 2 3

That they may be animated to it, and furnished for it, thoroughly furnished for every good work incumbent upon them, as men of God, a becoming reverence is to be maintained for the divinely inspired scriptures, apparently profitable for doctrine and reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness. Let us all esteem it our great happiness, if from children we have been acquainted with them; let us study them diligently, and take faithful care to deliver them down to those that arise after us, as the oracles of that eternal wisdom by which we and they may be made wise to salvation. Ch. iii. 16, 17 15

SECT. VII.

The apostle concludes with requesting Timothy to come to him, giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and adding some particular salutations and directions. 2 Tim. IV. 9,—*to the end.*

2 TIMOTHY IV. 9.

2 Tim. IV. 9. Do thy diligence to

I MIGHT add much more on this occasion, but the hope I have of seeing thee ere long,

SECT. VII.

2 Tim. IV. 10.

makes me the easier in omitting it. I cannot but be very desirous of such an interview. *Endeavour* therefore by all means *to come to me* here at Rome, as *quickly* as possible. *For* I need the assistance and company of such a faithful friend, as I have met with very unworthy treatment from some who ought to have acted in a very different manner. And I must particularly inform thee, that *Demas hath forsaken me*,[a] *having loved the present world, and* followed another way, as his secular views invited him. In pursuit of these, he *is gone to Thessalonica*, as *Crescens* is *to Galatia*, and *Titus*, for whom thou knowest I have a very high regard,

11 is gone *to Dalmatia*. *Luke alone*, whose faithful friendship I have long experienced, *is* still *with me*. I desire thou wouldest *take* the first opportunity of engaging the company of *Mark*, [*and*] *bring him along with thee, for he is useful to* the advancement of *my ministry* among the Gentiles, having often attended both Barnabas

12 and me in our progress amongst them. Thou wilt perceive, by what I have just been saying, what reason I have to wish for the society of an approved Christian friend *and* brother, at a time when I am left thus destitute: yet, preferring the edification of the church of Christ to any personal consideration of my own, *I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus*, where I some years ago left thee, to take care of the flourishing church which I planted there, and with some of whose members I have had so long and intimate an ac-

13 quaintance. *When thou comest* hither, as I hope thou quickly wilt, I desire thou wouldest remember to *bring* [*with thee*] *that cloak*[b] *which I left at the house of* our friend *Carpus, in*

come shortly unto me.

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with

[a] *Demas hath forsaken me.*] I think we can neither be certain, that Demas was ever a good man, from Paul's speaking of him, as one whom in the judgment of charity he hoped to be so, nor can we certainly infer from his dishonourable conduct on this occasion, that he totally apostatised from Christianity, and much less that he never returned to a sense of it any more. John Mark had once acted a part very like this, yet was evidently restored to the esteem of our apostle. Compare Acts xv. 38, with the next verse of this chapter.

[b] *Bring with thee that cloak.*] If φελόνην here signifies *cloak* or *mantle*, it is, as Grotius justly observes, a proof of Paul's poverty, that he had occasion to send so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one. But some understand by it, either a *parchment-roll*, or something like a *portmanteau*, the contents of which might be more important than the thing itself.

thee, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

14 Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works.

15 Of whom be thou ware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge.

Troas,[c] when I passed through it the last time. *And* bring also *the books* which I left there, [*but*] *especially the parchments*.[d] SECT. VII.

When I speak of these parts, I cannot forbear telling thee, that *Alexander the brazier*[e] *has brought many evils* and mischiefs *upon me*. And I doubt not but *the Lord*, who exercises a guardian care over me as his faithful servant, will sooner or later *reward him according to his works*. May it be an instructive and merciful discipline, to reform rather than to destroy him. *Against whom*, in the mean time, *be thou also* particularly *upon thy guard*, or thou mayest receive much detriment from him; *for he hath* not only done me a great deal of personal injury, but hath *greatly withstood our words*, and taken every measure in his power to prevent the progress and advancement of the gospel, which is indeed wounding me in the most tender and sensible part. 2 Tim. IV. 14. 15

In my first apology before the prefect of the city, *no man*, of all the Christians here at Rome, *appeared with me*, for my countenance and support, *but all*, either through treachery or cowardice, *forsook me*.[f] *May it not be charged to* 16

[c] *At Troas.*] See the Introduction to this epistle, p. 421.

[d] *The parchments.*] Bishop Bull thinks these parchments might be a kind of *common place book*, in which the apostle inserted hints and extracts of what seemed most remarkable in the authors he read.

[e] *Alexander the brazier.*] The name of Alexander was so common, that we cannot certainly say, whether this were the person mentioned Acts xix. 33, or 1 Tim. i. 20; but what is here said of this brazier, agrees so well with this passage, that I think it probable it refers to the same man. What we know of Paul's character must lead us to conclude, that, if he meant not the following words as a mere prediction, he did not however wish evil to him, as evil, but only that he might be so animadverted upon, as to prevent the contagion of his bad example from spreading in the church, and bring him to repentance and reformation, that so he might be preserved from final destruction.

[f] *All men forsook me.*] Many circumstances make it astonishing, that Paul should have been deserted by the Christians at Rome, in this extremity. When he wrote his epistle to the church there, which must have been ten years before this, he speaks of their *faith* as celebrated *through the world*; (Rom. i. 8.) He salutes a vast number of illustrious persons by name, and mentions many of them as his particular *friends*; (xvi. 3—15.) and we may assure ourselves, that, during the two years he spent there in his hired house, when access was granted to all that desired it, the number, and probably the zeal, of Christian converts would be greatly encreased; as indeed he expressly assures the Philippians that it was, and that some of Cæsar's palace was added to them. (Phil. i. 12—14: iv. 22.) We are ready to say, How then was it possible he should be thus forsaken? But there is a material circumstance, seldom taken notice of in this connection, which accounts in a great measure for what might otherwise appear so strange. Clement the companion of Paul, informs us, that he suffered martyrdom under the governors, (as Bishop Pearson and L'En-

SECT. VII.

2 Tim. IV. 17.

their account, as an instance of unfaithfulness to our common Master! Yet I was not left entirely destitute, *but* can say it with great pleasure, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ *stood by me, and strengthened me* with that inward fortitude of soul which no human support could have inspired; *that by me the preaching* [*of his gospel*] *might be carried on with confidence*,[g] *and* [*that*] *all the nations might hear*; for I made my defence in a manner, that will, I doubt not, be taken notice of, and reported abroad, much to the advantage of that sacred cause, which is dearer to me than my life. *And* though this plain and faithful testimony did indeed expose me to great danger, yet *I was* for the present *rescued*, like Daniel, *out of the mouth of the lion*; so that, fierce as he was, God did not suffer him to devour me, when he seemed to have me at
18 his mercy. *And*, I am confident, that *the Lord* whose power and faithfulness are always the same, *will rescue me* from what I fear much more than any thing this body can suffer, even *from every evil work*; will strengthen me against the most pressing and violent temptations, so that I shall do nothing unbecoming my Christian faith, or ministerial office, *and* thus *will preserve* and conduct [*me*] *to his heavenly kingdom* with peace and triumph; *to him* therefore [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

19 I must conclude with desiring thee to *salute Priscilla and Aquila*,[h] those dear friends, with

17 Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute Prisca, and Aquila, and the

sant explain μαζυρησας απο των τριμιτων, that is, as they understand it, when Nero was gone into Greece, and had left the government of the city to Tigellinus and Sabinus, prefects of the prætorian guard, and that monster Helius. If this be allowed, it fixes the death of Paul to A. D. 66, or 67. But the cruel persecution which Nero had raised against the Christians at Rome, (in which they were worried in the skins of wild beasts, and burnt alive for a kind of public illumination,) was, according to Tacitus, at least two years before this. It is possible, therefore, that many of the excellent persons mentioned above, might have suffered death for their religion, or, according to our Lord's advice, (Mat. x. 23,) have retired to a distance from Rome. The Asiatic Christians, who came with Paul, as it seems, to rally the broken remains of this once celebrated church, acted a mean part in deserting Paul, as the other Christians of the place did. But it is less surprising upon the supposition above, that it would otherwise have appeared; and it might be among the first-fruits of that sad apostasy which Vitringa, (as was elsewhere observed,) supposes to have begun in the time of Nero, and continued to that of Trajan. See note [a] on 2 Tim. iii. 1.

[g] *Carried on with confidence.*] So the original πληροφορηθη here signifies. Calvin truly observes, that it was a glorious testimony to the honour of Christianity, that the apostle could thus courageously maintain it, when all his *friends* forsook him, and his *enemies* were so fiercely raging against him.

[h] *Priscilla and Aquila.*] This has often been urged, as a conclusive argument,

household of Onesiphorus.

whom I have had so agreeable an acquaintance and intercourse these many years; *and* also *the family of* good *Onesiphorus*. In my last journey through Asia and Greece I had the affliction to part with some of our common friends, whose conversation and company would have been very desirable, had Providence permitted it. *Erastus* in particular *abode at Corinth*,[1] *and Trophimus I left sick at Miletus*:[k] nor did the Lord, who hath made me an instrument of miraculous healing to so many strangers, permit me at that time to be so to him. *Endeavour* therefore, as I am deprived of these agreeable friends, and surrounded with so many dangers and enemies which threaten my life, *to come* to me *before winter*.[l] Several Christians here at Rome desire I would send their commendations to thee; and in particular *Eubulus salutes thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and* indeed *all the brethren* in general. My heart is, as at all times, full of the tenderest affection for thee; which I cannot express better than by praying, as I most sincerely do, that *the Lord Jesus Christ* himself may [*be*] ever present *with*

SECT. VII.

2 Tim. IV. 19.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy

20

21

22

to prove that Timothy was now at Ephesus, because it was there that Apollos met with them, (Acts xviii. 26.) but they might have removed from thence, as they did from Corinth, to which place they came when first banished from Rome. Ib. ver. 2.

[1] *Erastus abode at Corinth*, &c.] It is probable that this was his native city, or at least a place where he had a stated charge. See Rom. xvi. 23. It seems, by this clause, that he was in Paul's company when he parted with Timothy, as it is likely Trophimus also was. And, as none can suppose Paul would have mentioned these things to Timothy in this connection, if they had happened many years before, (Acts xix. 22.) I look upon this as a very material argument to prove that he turned into these eastern parts, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though probably, if he ever saw Ephesus again, most of the ministers of that and the neighbouring places, with whom he had the celebrated interview at Miletus, mentioned Acts xx. were either dead or removed. See ver. 25, note[f], and ver. 38, note[r], Vol. III. p. 309, and 307. Compare the Introduction to the first epistle to Timothy, p. 355.

[k] *Left sick*.] It has been very justly argued from this text, that a power of working miracles did not always reside in the apostles; and indeed, if it had, one can hardly imagine that any good and useful man would have been sick, and died under their notice, which would have been quite inconsistent with the scheme of Providence. Timothy's frequent infirmities afford a farther argument to the same purpose. Compare Acts viii. 21, note, vol. III. p. 111. But such good men as these did not need the miraculous cure of their own distempers, to confirm their faith in the gospel.

[l] *Come to me before winter*.] Bishop Lloyd in his Funeral Sermon for Bishop Wilkins, p. 6 comparing with this text, Heb. xiii. 23, concludes that Timothy did come, and was seized at Rome, and confined longer than Paul himself: but it seems much more probable that the epistle to the Hebrews was written during Paul's *first* imprisonment, and consequently several years before this.

SECT. VII.

thy spirit and shed abroad those sanctifying, quickening, and comforting influences of Divine grace, which may fit thee for all thou hast to do and bear under thy Christian and ministerial character. And, wherever this finds thee, I desire thou wouldst assure my fellow-Christians that I wish them well. May *grace* [*be*] *with you* all, as your circumstances require, to render you more eminently useful in the present state, and prepare for you complete and everlasting happiness in the next. *Amen.*

2 Tim. IV. 22. spirit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

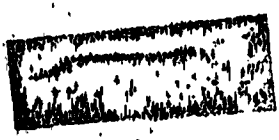
BE this our prayer for ourselves and our friends, that the
Ver. 22. *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits* and ours; that, though we have not seen him here, neither can see him, we may ever feel his vital presence, and may live and act as ever near him, and as conscious that he is ever with us.
17 Then may we promise ourselves that, while he stands by us, we shall be strengthened, how weak soever we are in ourselves; that we shall be
18 rescued from the extremest dangers, *delivered out of the mouth of the* infernal *lion*, and safely *preserved to his heavenly kingdom.*
16 That such a confessor as the holy apostle St. Paul should have been deserted, at the time of his apology, when there must have been so large a number of Christians at Rome, may justly appear one of the most surprising circumstances recorded in the sacred history. It teaches us to cease from man, and to repose ourselves with some caution upon the friendship of the very best. It teaches us to watch over *ourselves*, lest *the fear of man* should *bring a snare* upon us, (Prov. xxix. 25.) and lead us to be ashamed of Christ in his members. It concurs with the apostasy of Demas, to warn us that we beware of loving this
10 present world, and keep our eyes more steadily fixed on a better, in which our highest interest lies, and by regarding which, our souls will acquire a certain uniform tenor, that will prove their honour and their safety.

The readiness of Paul, amidst such a dearth of true and faith-
10, 12 ful friends, to part with those that yet remained, when he thought the service of Christianity required it, is an amiable and instructive part of his character. They know not the heart of a man, and the duty of a Christian aright, who know not that even the tender and friendly passions are to be guarded against, and admitted no farther than reason and religion will warrant; and that such society as is far dearer to us than any animal delight, or secular accommodation, is often to be given up, that our fidelity to God may be approved.

SECT. VII. Ver. 1

Once more, it is obvious to remark, that Paul, though favoured with such extraordinary degrees of Divine inspiration, sets a proper value upon books, and expresses a great concern about their being safely conveyed to him. Let us therefore pity the ignorance, rather than imitate the enthusiasm and madness of those that set learning at defiance, especially in the ministers of the gospel. Let us thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness, in having furnished us with so many excellent *writings* of wise and pious men in all ages; and let us endeavour, by frequent converse with them, to improve our furniture, *that our profiting may appear unto all men.* Yet let us all remember that, how large and well-chosen soever our library may be, the sacred volume is of infinitely greater importance than all that Greece, or Rome, or Britain has produced, or the united labours of all the best of men who have written since it was concluded. And let the Christian minister remember, that the two epistles, through which we have now passed, and that which we are next to survey, are to be esteemed by him amongst the most edifying and important parts even of that incomparable and Divine book.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.



THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

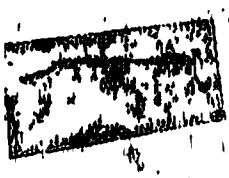
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.



A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS, to whom this epistle is addressed, was a Greek, (Gal. ii. 3); and was probably converted to Christianity by St. Paul, as we may conclude from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4); though the particular time of his conversion cannot be ascertained.—The earliest account of him we meet with (for Luke does not once mention his name in the Acts,) is in Gal. ii. 1, where the apostle says, he took him with him from Antioch to Jerusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, to attend the grand council that was held there, in the year 49; and, as Titus was of Gentile parents, and consequently uncircumcised, St. Paul would not suffer him to submit to that rite, that he might not seem to abridge the liberty of the Christian Gentiles, (ver. 3.)

Some years after this, we find the apostle had sent him to Corinth, (2 Cor. xii. 18,) to inquire into the state of things in that church, and particularly to learn what effect his former letter had produced. The intelligence Titus brought St. Paul at his return, gave him the highest satisfaction, as it far exceeded all his expectations; (chap. vii. 6. 13.) and, as Titus had expressed a particular regard for the Corinthians, he thought proper to send him back again, with some others, to hasten

the collection for the poor Christians in Judea; (chap. viii. 6.) After this, we hear no more mention of him, till he is spoken of in this epistle, as having been with St. Paul in Crete.—It appears, that the apostle had a very great regard for him, not only from his appointing him to take care of the church he had planted in Crete, but from the manner in which he speaks of his discharging the commission he gave him to the Corinthians, and the honourable terms in which he recommends him to them as *his partner* and *fellow-helper*; (chap. viii. 23.)

This epistle was most probably written in some part of St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; and consequently the last of his epistles, except the second to Timothy: but nothing can be certainly determined, either as to its date, or the place from whence it was sent; for though the spurious postscript supposes it to have been written from Nicopolis, yet the contrary seems to be plainly intimated, chap. iii. 12; as the apostle says not, I propose to winter here, (which would have been most natural, if he had resided there when he was writing,) but there; which shews he was at that time in some other place.—However, it is plain Titus was at Crete when he received it, where St. Paul had left him, to settle the church he had established there, and carry on the work he had begun. Accordingly the greatest part of the epistle is taken up in giving him directions for the more successful discharge of his ministry amongst them; and particularly for his behaviour towards those corrupt Judaizing teachers who endeavoured to pervert the faith and disturb the peace of the Christian church.

The apostle, after a short introduction, in which (agreeably to the design of the epistle, he intimates that he was commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him at Crete, and directs him on what principles he was to act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches; representing them as persons not only of a blameless, but exemplary character, who should be eminent for their

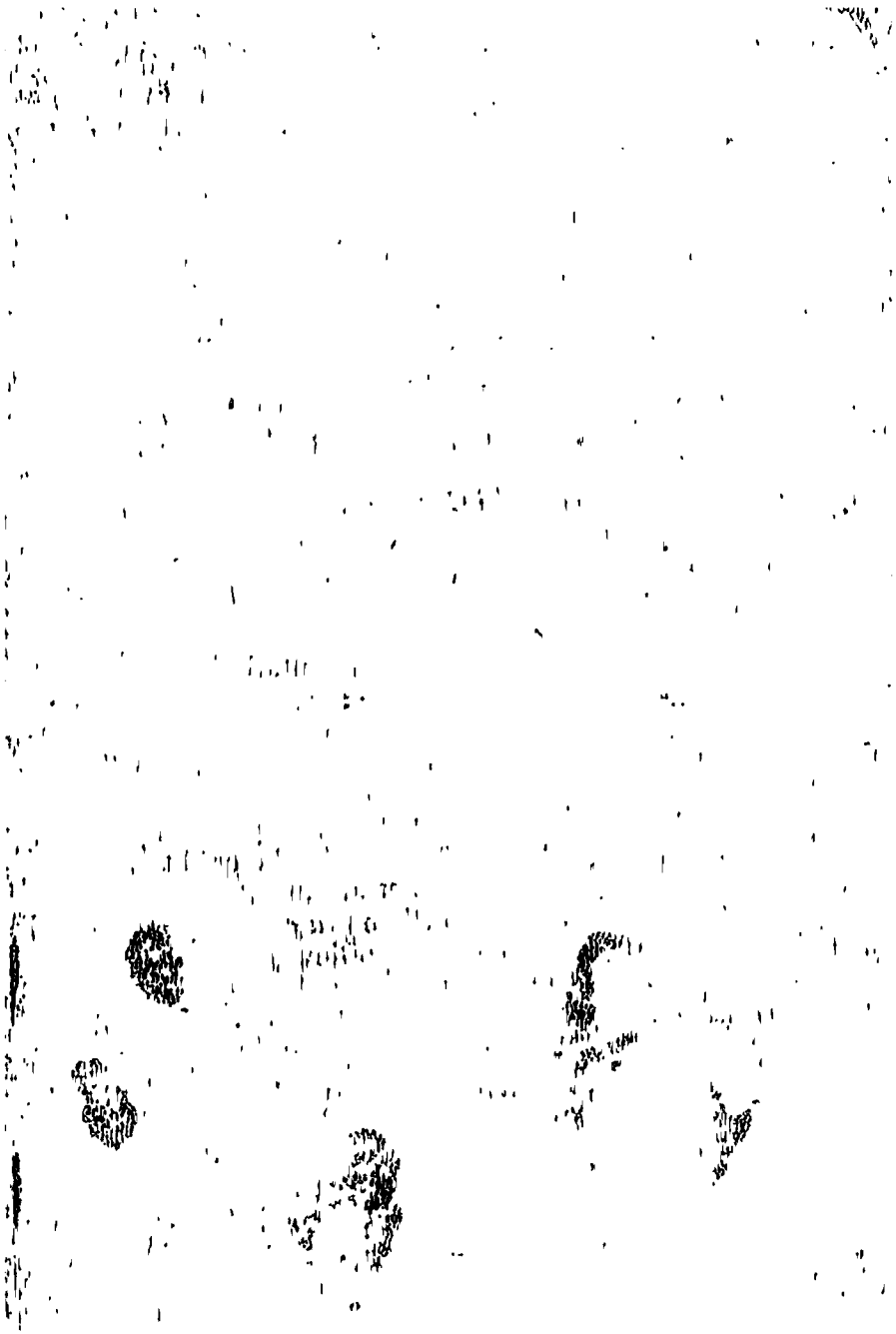
piety, and for every social and personal virtue, as well as thoroughly established in the Christian faith; chap. i. 1—9. And, to make Titus more sensible of the necessity of using this precaution, he puts him in mind of those seducing Judaizing teachers with which that church was infested; who, under the mask of greater zeal and knowledge than others, concealed the grossest corruption of morals, and whose mischievous attempts were the more likely to succeed, considering the general character of the Cretans. Such therefore he directs him to reprove with great severity, and, in opposition to their false and dangerous tenets, advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. And to give the greater weight to his instructions, he admonishes him to be himself an example of what he taught, and by the purity of his doctrine, as well as the innocence of his conduct, to silence his opponents, ver. 18, to the end. Chap. ii. 1—8. St. Paul then proceeds to urge on Titus, a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station, that they might, according to their sphere, do an honour to the religion they professed; and represents the obligation they were under to such a conduct, from the great design of the gospel-institution, and our Saviour's sufferings and death, which was to deliver mankind from sin, and form them to universal holiness in heart and life, ver. 9, to the end.—Agreeably to this view of religion, the apostle exhorts Titus to enforce subjection to the civil magistrate, and a readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention, and recommend a meek, peaceable, and forgiving temper: which he intimates might the more reasonably be expected from Christian Gentiles, as before their conversion their character had been so corrupt. This leads him to acknowledge the grace of God in Christ, to which all Christians were indebted for the change produced in them, and for the hopes of salvation they were taught to entertain; from whence he takes occasion to remind Titus of the importance of insisting upon the

great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those empty speculations and useless controversies to which some were attached. In the close of the epistle, he directs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and having expressed his desire to see him at Nicopolis, where he proposed to winter, he concludes with a general salutation; chap. iii. 1, to the end of the epistle.

Upon a review of this, and the two epistles to Timothy, it is natural to reflect how much they tend to illustrate and confirm the internal evidence of Christianity.—It has been often observed, and very justly, that nothing sets the characters of great men in so true a light as their letters to their particular friends: while they are acting in the eye of the world they frequently appear in disguise, and the real motives of their conduct lie out of sight; but in their familiar correspondence they open their minds with freedom, and throw off all reserve. If therefore any should object to the argument drawn from St. Paul's epistles to the churches, that, as they were designed for the public view, he would be upon his guard, not to let any expression escape him that might give the world an unfavourable idea of himself, or the cause in which he was engaged; yet certainly, when he is writing, as in this and the two former epistles, to his most intimate friends, who were embarked with him in the same design, and with whom therefore he could use the utmost confidence, we may reasonably expect to find him disclosing his real sentiments, stripped of all artifice and disguise.—And now, upon the most accurate and impartial examination of these epistles, what do we discover? Can we trace any marks of insincerity and imposture? Does the apostle wear any other character than that in which he had appeared to the whole world? Does he drop the least hint that can lead one so much as to suspect that he had been only acting a part, and imposing upon mankind? Can we perceive the least shadow of inconsistency between the views he gives of religion in these and his other writings? Is there any thing like that double doctrine which some

have charged upon the ancient philosophers?—On the contrary, is it not most evident, that he founded his own hopes, and formed his own conduct, upon the very same principles which he recommended to others; that he had no views of secular interest or ambition to gratify, and was influenced by no other motives than those which he openly avowed in the face of the world: in a word, that his character, as well as his doctrine, was consistent and uniform, and his inward sentiments the same with his outward profession? The instructions he gives his friends for the exercise of their office had nothing of art or subtilty, but were all plain and simple, and centered in that grand design of advancing the interests of religion and the happiness of mankind, which ever lay near his heart: and so far is he from flattering them with the prospect of any worldly advantage, that he exhorts them to be ready, after his example, to sacrifice every temporal interest, and even life itself, in the cause they had undertaken to support.

Now if this be allowed a just representation of the case, it will certainly follow, that the apostle was himself thoroughly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines he had taught: and since it may be easily proved, that the *evidence* on which he built his faith was of such a nature, as to exclude all possibility of *mistake*, we may safely conclude, upon the credit of *his* testimony *alone*, (had we no other arguments to produce,) that the Christian religion is not *a cunningly devised fable*, formed to answer the ambitious or interested views of its authors, but that it is indeed *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*.



A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TITUS.

SECT. I.

Paul, after a proper introduction, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him in Crete; and directs him on what principles he should act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches. Tit. I. 1—9.

TITUS I. 1.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness:

TITUS I. 1.

THIS epistle is written by *Paul, a servant of* the one living and true *God, and an apostle of* his only begotten Son, *Jesus Christ, for* the advancement of *the faith*[a] *of God's chosen* people, *and* to promote *the acknowledgment of the truth* of the gospel; that divine doctrine *which* [*is*] *according to godliness*, and has the greatest tendency to promote the interest of the true religion in all its branches; Whilst it exhibits, *in* so clear a manner, *the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie,* nor deceive any of

SECT. I. Titus I. 1.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, pro-

2

[a] *For the faith*, &c.] This is the proper signification of κατα πιστιν, in this connection, which expresses the *end* to which his labours tended. Compare 1. Tim. vi. 3. See Raph. ex Xen. in loc.

SECT. I. Titus. I. 2.

his creatures, *hath* not only, as under the former dispensation, intimated to us, but expressly *promised* to all believers, in consequence of those great engagements into which he entered with his Son, under the character of our Surety and Redeemer, *before the world began*[b], or time was divided into these revolving periods which measure out its succeeding ages. The plan was distinctly drawn in his all-comprehensive mind; *but* he *hath* now *manifested* it, *in his own* due and well-chosen *time*, by *his word*; which administers to us that glorious hope, *by the* public *preaching* and declaration of it, *with which I was intrusted, according to the commandment* and sovereign pleasure *of God our Saviour.*

mised before the world began.

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour:

And I address this epistle *to Titus*, [*my*] *genuine son, according to the* tenor of the *common faith*, even that Christian faith to which I had the happiness of converting thee: to whom, with an affection becoming a father in Christ, I unfeignedly wish every desirable blessing, even *grace, mercy*, and *peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*; by whom we obtain an interest in him, and hope for that eternal salvation from him, with which no inheritance on earth is by any means worthy to be compared.

4 To Titus, *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

For this cause I left thee in Crete, though I could have been so heartily glad of thy company in my travels, *that thou mightest set in order the things which were deficient* there, as I could not stay long enough myself to reduce them into so regular a state as I could have wished; *and* particularly, that thou mightest *ordain elders in every city*[c] in which Christian churches are planted, to whom the stated oversight of them

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every

[b] *Before the world began.*] It seems more natural to refer this to the promise made by the Father to Christ, in the *covenant of redemption*, than, with Mr. Rymer, to explain it of the *promise* made, quickly after the *creation*, to our fallen parents; Gen. iii. 15. See Rymer of Rev. Rel. p. 49.

[c] *Ordain elders in every city.*] There were an hundred cities in the island of Crete, though its dimensions were not very large; but it is well known, that every considerable town was called a *city* by the ancients. It is most likely, that some congregations were settled under proper ministers while Paul was among them; but there were others not so provided, and the interposition of so wise and good a man as Titus, probably honoured with such extraordinary gifts, would, no doubt, have great weight on such an occasion.

city, as I had appointed thee.

6 If any man be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly.

may be committed in the Lord, *as I gave thee in charge* when I parted with thee. SECT. I.

The office is so very important, that I hope thou wilt be proportionably careful as to the character of the persons who are to be invested with it; and *if any one is* thought of in that view, let it be one who is known to be *blameless* in his conduct, *the husband of* only *one wife*, to whom he entirely confines himself, neither allowing of polygamy, or divorce, or an irregular commerce with any other women; and let him be one *who hath believing children*,[d] if he have any that are grown up, *not accused of* any kind of *debauchery*, *or ungovernable* in their temper and disposition, which would render them a reproach rather than an honour to the Christian name. I must insist on a care in this respect, *for* it is evident, that the disorders of children often reflect a dishonour on their parents, and indeed arise from something amiss in them: but *a bishop*, or overseer of a Christian congregation, which the elder we speak of, by virtue of his office, is, *must* necessarily *be blameless*,[e] *as* he is, in that society over which he presides, *the steward of God*, who is appointed in his name, to take care of his family. He must *not* therefore be fierce and *self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant,[f] *not soon provoked* to be angry, *not one who sits long over* his cups, and loves to drink large quantities of *wine*, *not a*

Titus I. 6.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

[d] *Believing children.*] This is mentioned with great propriety; for, if a man were not careful to instruct his *children* in the principles of Christianity, there would be great reason to doubt, whether he were hearty in the belief of it himself, and under a governing sense of its truth and importance: and, if a man had only *unbelieving* children in his house, that is, such as were so obstinate that they could not be brought to embrace Christianity, by any of the arguments which could be laid before them in that age of miracles, it would be a great discouragement, and, in some circumstances, a great hindrance to him, from pursuing the duties of a Christian elder or bishop. And those evils, into which such obstinate infidel *children* might fall, would, very probably, bring a reproach upon the family, which might in a degree, hurt the character of him who presided in it.

[e] *For a bishop must be blameless.*] It has been often observed, that, if the bishop, of whom Paul speaks, had been invested with an office *distinct* from, and *superior* to the *elder* mentioned above, there could have been no room to conclude, that an *elder must be blameless*, because a bishop must be so, though the argument would have held strongly in an inverted order. By what degrees, and on what reasons, the distinction was afterwards introduced, (as a distinction to be sure there early was,) it is not my business here to inquire.

[f] *Self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant.] Raphelius has taken a great deal of pains to shew, that this is the proper signification of αὐθάδη, the word here used. See Raph. ex Herod. in loc.

SECT. 1. *striker* of others, by which, whatsoever his provocation may be, he always degrades himself in the eyes of those that are witnesses of the quarrel, *nor greedy of sordid* and infamous 8 *gain: But* he ought to maintain a character directly the opposite of all these, and to be *hospitable, benign, sober*, and grave in his deportment, *righteous, holy*, devout, and *temperate* in 9 all things. *Holding fast*, in the most resolute manner, *the faithful word which he hath been taught* by those who were commissioned to publish it to the world, *that so he may be able both to instruct* others *in sound doctrine, and to convince* and silence *those that contradict it.*

1 Titus i. 7.

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.

9 Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. NEVER let it be forgotten by any that call themselves *Christians*, that the *faith of God's elect* is the *acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness*. Never let the great design of Christianity be lost in an eager contention for any of its appendages, or any of its parts. Yet alas, how often has it, in particular instances, been wounded almost to death, in a furious attempt to rescue it, and that, sometimes, perhaps, from only an imaginary danger.

2 That we may be more sensible of its *vital* influence, let us ever retain the hope of that eternal life which it proposes, as the great end of all our pursuits; even of that life which God that cannot lie hath promised. Let us rejoice to think, that so immense a superstructure has so firm, so divine a foundation; and let us never give it up for any thing that a flattering world, always ready to engage, and slow to perform, can promise.

Let us ever be very thankful for the provision God hath made *for the manifestation of his word through preaching*, and for his 3 goodness in raising up faithful pastors to his church, overseers in every age, who have been blameless, sober, just, holy, and 7, 8 temperate. Such may all be that appear under that sacred character; able, by their doctrine to instruct, by their reasoning to convince, by their practice to edify; ever solicitous, that they 9 may not neglect their pastoral services, that they may not lord it proudly over their brethren, that they may not be transported by furious passions, or misguided by rash conclusions, or per- 7 verted by low interests, and the greediness of filthy lucre; but that they may approve themselves the faithful stewards of God, and promote the good order of his house; and, so far as their influence can reach, the happiness of every member of his family.

In order to this, let them look well to their own houses, that

nothing may be wanting on their part, to make their children tractable, faithful, and sober. And let the children of ministers consider the obligations they are under, to cultivate a teachable spirit, and to maintain the strictest decency in their whole deportment, as remembering the superior advantages they may be supposed to enjoy for religious improvement, and how much a minister's reputation and usefulness depend upon the regularity of his family. SECT. I. Ver. 6.

SECT. II.

Paul cautions Titus against seducing teachers, and the native vices of the Cretans; and advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. Titus I. 10, *to the end.* Chap. II. 1—8.

TITUS I. 10.

FOR there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;

TITUS I. 10.

I HAVE particularly insisted upon it, that a bishop should be able to convince gainsayers, as well as to instruct candid and obedient hearers. And indeed the precaution is very necessary at present, and particularly in the place where you now preside; *for there are many disorderly* [*persons*] *and vain talkers who are deceived in their own minds*, in consequence of which it is no wonder if they are active in deceiving others. And this is *especially* the case with *those of the circumcision*, who are so eager to impose on their Gentile brethren the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as if Christianity itself were insufficient to save us without them: *Whose mouth must* therefore *be stopped* by solid arguments, and their unreasonable clamours silenced by the strenuous exercise of discipline: for they are persons *who* are so active in spreading these mischievous notions, that they *overturn whole families, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of infamous gain*; hoping by their doctrines to secure the favour of some rich men, who never think they can do enough for those preachers that support their own factions and dividing notions. SECT. II. Titus. I. 10.

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

I know that there are many such at present in your island; and I remember that Epimenides, *one of their* [*countrymen,*] and a poet in such

12 One of themselves, even a pro-

SECT. II. Titus I. 12.

high renown, that I may call him *a* kind of *prophet of their own*,[a] *has said, The Cretans are always liars, pernicious savage beasts*, and yet *slow bellies*,[b] a wretched compound of luxury and idleness, fierceness and falsehood, which makes it exceedingly difficult to reform them, or even to live safely and quietly among them.

phet of their own, said, The Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 *This witness* concerning them *is*, in the general, *true*, though some particular persons may be found of a different character. *For which cause rebuke them severely*,[c] when they begin to shew a disposition to corrupt Christianity; *that they may be sound in the faith*, and that the simpler part of them may be preserved from the dishonest artifices and attempts of others. And particularly, that they may *not* fall into the

13 This witness, is true: Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

14 Not giving

[a] *A prophet.*] Epimenides, whose words Paul here quotes, is said by Diogenes Laertius, to have been a great favourite of the gods; but Aristotle says he never foretold any future event; which, as Dr. Scott justly observes, (Scott's Christian Life, Vol. III. p. 650.) is a plain argument, that the word *prophet* is sometimes used in a large sense, for one who is supposed, by the person applying the title to him, to be an *instructor of men in Divine things*, from whom the will of the *Deity* may be learnt.

[b] *Cretans are always liars, &c.*] Perhaps it might have been in some views more proper to have translated this Greek verse in such a manner, that it might have read as a verse in English, "*False* "*Cretans! Savage beasts, with bellies slow!*" It is evident, the poet here suggests a remarkable contrast, to shew what a mixture there was of *fierceness* and *luxury* in the characters of the Cretans. Savage beasts are generally active and nimble; but *these men*, while they had the fury of lions and tygers, indulged themselves so much in the most sordid idleness and intemperance, that they grew (as it were) *all belly*; and, like a breed of swine common in the eastern countries, were often so burdened with fat that they could hardly move. As for their proneness to *falsehood*, it is well known that κρητίζειν, *to talk like a Cretan*, was a proverb for lying, (as κορινθιάζειν, *to live like a Corinthian*, was for a luxurious and debauched life.) (See Erasm. Prov. p. 645, 646.) and it is remarkable, that Polybius scarce ever mentions this nation without some severe censure. See Raphel e Polyb. in loc.

[c] *Rebuke them severely.*] Ἀποτόμως, with a *cunning severity*. From whence Mr. Blackwall infers, that it is a vain pretence that only *gentle* and *soft* expressions are to be applied to people that renounce good principles, and corrupt the gospel. Black. Vind. Vol. I. p. 308, 309. But Paul speaks of reproving *vice*, not *error*; and if any consequence is to be drawn from one to the other, the remark is to be admitted with much caution, considering to what a degree pride and passion often transport men, even in the management of *theological* controversies, beyond all bounds of prudence, charity, and decency. Timothy is exhorted to *rebuke with all long-suffering*, (2 Tim. iv. 2.) and some account for the difference, by the different tempers of the reprovers; supposing that of Timothy might be *warmer* than that of Titus; others, by the different *character* of the persons to be reproved; as the Ephesians seem to have been more gentle, obliging, and complaisant, the Cretans more obstinate, rough, and headstrong. But the best reply seems to be this, that there is a *degree* of *long-suffering* and gentleness, very consistent with all that *severity* which faithfulness requires; which is not that of boisterous passion, ill-nature, and scurrility, but of *meek*, though *resolute*, zeal for God, and friendship to the offender; which yet will not be silenced by trifling excuses, nor fail seriously to represent the fatal consequences that may attend the evil reproved.

heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

folly of *giving heed to Jewish fables, and* to *the commandments* and traditions *of men, who pervert the truth* of the gospel with those human mixtures by which they have in a great measure spoiled and enervated the law of Moses, for which they pretend so great a zeal.

SECT. II. Titus. I. 14.

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

I know they value themselves highly upon the distinctions of food, which they inculcate as of so great importance to purity. But they are much mistaken. *To the pure indeed all things* [*are*] *pure.* A man that habitually exercises a good conscience towards God, according to the best of his knowledge, is accepted of him, whether he do, or do not, abstain from such particular kinds of food as they scruple; *whereas, to the polluted and unbelieving*, which, alas, is too generally their character, *nothing* [*is*] *pure, but their very mind and conscience is defiled*, and they pollute as it were, every thing they touch; they sin in all their actions, and even in those very meals in which they are most careful to abstain from what they have been taught to esteem common and unclean. I speak not now of all who practise Jewish ceremonies, but of those [*who while*] *they profess to know God*, and glory in their relation to him, as his peculiar people, *in works deny* [*him*,] and act as if they disbelieved his very existence; *being abominable* to all that can judge of true worth, *and disobedient* to the plainest dictates of duty, *and* with respect *to every good work reprobate*, disapproved and condemned, when brought to the standard of God's word, though they are among the first to judge and condemn others.

15

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

16

CHAP. II. 1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

Such is the temper and character of many! *But do thou*, O Titus, not only guard against the infection thyself, but endeavour to fortify others against it, and *speak the things which become wholesome doctrine*, doctrine which may tend to promote the health and happiness of those minds by which it is imbibed. And endeavour to suit thy instructions to *the* different characters of persons whom thou addressest. When, for instance, thou art applying thyself to *aged men*, [*admonish*] them *to be watchful* against temptations, which might dishonour their advanced years, by drawing them into any

CH. II. 1.

2 That the aged

SECT. II. Titus. II. 2.

unseemly behaviour; to be *grave* in their whole deportment, avoiding such levities as are, even in youth itself, rather pardonable than commendable, but in those who are quitting the stage of life, highly indecent. Press it upon them, that they be *sober* and temperate in the use of animal pleasures, as their highest relish for them may well be supposed, by this time, to be abated. In a word, that they be *sound*, healthful, and vigorous in the several graces of the Christian temper, and particularly *in faith*, *in love*, and *in patience;* that the principles of Christianity may be retained, and have a suitable effect upon their hearts, to produce unbounded charity, and a calm composure under the calamities they may suffer from the hand of God, or the persecutions they may meet with in the cause of the gospel.

men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience:

3 *The aged women, in like manner,* [*exhort*] *to that steadiness which becometh saints,* and suits the holy profession they make; that they be *not false accusers* of others, a character rather to be expected from the great enemy of mankind, who has his name from thence, than from the disciples of the benevolent Jesus. Urge them also that they be *not given to much wine*, for some of the Cretan women, as well as men, are infected with that luxurious evil. And, as it may be reasonably expected, that persons so advanced in life should have laid up a treasure of prudence and religious wisdom in their minds, press them, in such a manner as becomes their private station, to be *teachers of that which is good:*

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 And particularly, *that they wisely admonish the younger women;* for whom they ought to maintain a maternal affection, and form them, on discreet maxims, to a prudent care in future life; teaching them *to love* and honour *their husbands; to love their children* with such a true affection as shall engage them to use the most pious and tender care in forming their minds by all the offices of a good education, so many of which will naturally depend upon the mother.

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children

5 Let them inculcate it upon these young mistresses of rising families, [*that they be*] *discreet* and *chaste*, attentive to domestic affairs, and in that

5 To be discreet,

chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

view *keeping at home*,[d] to look after them with prudence and care; that they be *good*, kind, and benevolent in their behaviour to all, and, particularly, *obedient to their own husbands*, *that* so *the word of God*, which they profess to have received into their hearts, and to reverence as their oracles, *may not be blasphemed* by their foolish or perverse, rebellious or licentious, conduct. SECT. II. Titus II. 5

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

In like manner also, *exhort the young men*, the hope of rising families, upon whom so much of the credit and support of the gospel will depend, that they accustom themselves betimes *to be sober* and steady in their behaviour, superior to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government. 6

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.

And, that this address to them and others may be more successful *in all things*, be still *shewing thyself a pattern of good works*, by which others may model their conduct with advantage: while employed *in teaching*, be constantly [*exercising*] *uncorruptness*, that nothing may be spoken but the genuine truth; and let it be attended with a *gravity* in declaring it, proportionable to its importance, and proceed from *sincerity* of heart; Still uttering *wholesome* 8 *speech that cannot be confuted, that he who is on the contrary side*, and will obstinately persist in his infidelity, *may be ashamed* of his opposition, *having no evil to say of you*, or those committed to your care; but may be obliged, with all his prejudices, to acknowledge that you are a worthy president over a worthy and valuable society of men. 7

8 Sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we are reading the word of God, let us attentively observe what characters are adorned with honour, and what are branded with infamy. It is melancholy to think, that any nation, though ever so small, ever so remote, ever so destitute of cultivation and instruction, should deserve the characters which Epimenides gave of the Cretans, and which Paul found reason to Ver. 12

[d] *Keeping at home*, to look after, &c.] Elsner has shewn, in a learned note on this place, that the word οἰκουρούς is used by several of the best authors to express both these ideas.

SECT. II. confirm: that luxury and fraud, idleness and fury, dissonant as they may seem, should be their governing inclinations. Sad distempers in the mind of men! But how peculiarly lamentable, when they prevail among professing Christians! for among those that are Christians indeed they cannot possibly prevail. Yet surely there are not a few, even in Britain, with all its advantages, Ver. 16. who, while *professing to know God*, and *Christ Jesus* his Son, *in works deny him.* Such are abominable, in proportion to the degree in which they are disobedient; and, as they are reprobate to every good work now, must expect to be rejected with abhorrence at last, by that God, whose name they have blasphemed, and whose Son they have dishonoured.

To remedy, and, if it be possible, to prevent such evils, let the Ch. ii. 2, 6 ministers of Christ be still applying themselves, with suitable exhortations and charges, to all with whom they are concerned. Let them apply to the aged and the young; and let the aged of both sexes use that authority which their more advanced progress in life may give, to enforce upon the rising generation lessons of wisdom and piety, according to their respective sexes and cir- 4, 5 cumstances in life: that *prudence and chastity, economy and sweetness of temper*, a *subjection to their husbands*, formed on love and on religion, may be the character of *young wives*; and that they may join to it, that very important duty, of a pious care in the *education of those children* which God may give them. And 6 may the sobriety of young men encourage a hope, that they will preside over their families in the fear of God, and repay the goodness of such amiable consorts! And may the teachers, whether in public or private life, be themselves examples of the virtues they inculcate; that they who study to asperse Christianity, may find themselves silenced, till their shame turns into a worthier affection; till their silence breaks out into praise, and they, imbibing the like principles, feel them productive of the like virtues!

SECT. III.

Paul urges on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station; and represents their great obligations to discharge them, from a general view of the design of the gospel, and the love of our Redeemer in it. Tit. ii. 9, *to the end.*

TITUS II. 9.

WHILST thou art, according to the direction I have given thee above, instructing the superior ranks of mankind, I would not have thee neglect the lowest; but [*exhort*] their slaves and other *servants*, who are honoured

TITUS II. 9. *EXHORT* servants,

SECT. III.

Titus II. 9.

to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things; not answering again;

with a call into the Christian church, *to be subject to their own masters*, with reverence and obedience; *pleasing* [*them*] *in all things*, so far as they lawfully may, and *not answering again*, in a pert and insolent manner, if they are reproved by them, even though it should be unjustly, or with an excess of severity.

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Not privately defrauding them[a] of any thing that is committed to their trust, *but shewing all good fidelity* upon every occasion; *that* so, instead of bringing any reproach upon religion, *they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, and recommend it to the esteem of their masters and others, when they shall observe its influence on all its professors, to make them careful in the discharge of every social and relative duty.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;

For the saving grace of God, in the gospel-dispensation, *hath appeared unto all men*, to men of all nations, and of all ranks and orders of life, for this great purpose, that it may train them up for eternal salvation, by a holy temper, and a useful exemplary behaviour.

12 Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

This it effects under Divine influence, by *instructing us* all, wherever it comes, *that denying* the solicitations of *ungodliness and worldly lusts*, to which men of this world so naturally abandon themselves, *we should live soberly* in the government of our appetites *and* passions; *righteously* in our conduct towards our fellow-creatures; *and piously* in our behaviour towards God, and converse with him, while we are by his providence continued *in this present* vain and transitory *world*; through which we trust he is leading us to a blissful immortality.

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

And this is the great object which he requires us still to keep in view; and that we should all, in our different situations, be *waiting*, with ardent expectation and desires, *for the blessed hope* which he hath set before us, *and* for the full consummation of it, in *the glorious appearance of the great God, and* of *our*

[a] *Privately defrauding.*] The word νοσφιζω properly signifies to *keep back part of the worth of any thing*, and is used in the case of *Ananias' secreting a part*, where the *whole* was pretended to be returned; Acts v. 2, 3. This, *servants*, at least among the heathens, might probably do when employed by their masters to vend commodities; and other fraudulent practices, among persons of their rank, were so common, that the same word in the Latin language, [*fur*] is used for a *servant*, and a *thief*.

SECT. III.

Titus II. 13

Saviour Jesus Christ;[b] who shall be manifested with Divine pomp and majesty, in the last day, to redeem all his servants from the power of the grave, and to conduct them in their complete persons, to the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom.

14 Such are our sublime hopes from this glorious Lord, to whom we have all vowed subjection, whether we be bond or free; even to him *who gave himself* up to ignominy, torment, and death *for us, that he might* thereby *redeem us*, not only from final vengeance and destruction, but *from* the power of *all iniquity; and* might *purify to himself a peculiar people*, who should thankfully own themselves his property, and express their gratitude for such inestimable favours, by being not only careful to avoid the practice of evil, but *zealous of good works*, active in all the duties of life, and in every office of righteousness and goodness to each other. The highest of mankind are not above owning the obligation, and it is his will that the lowest should remember it.

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 *These things* therefore *speak* boldly, *and* earnestly *exhort* all thine hearers to attend to them. *And*, if they fail of regarding them in a proper manner, *rebuke* them *with all authority*, as one that knows he has a Divine commission to support him: and, upon the whole, *let no man despise thee;* but endeavour to give these exhortations with that solemnity and dignity, and to enforce them by that wisdom and sanctity of behaviour, which may set thee above all danger of contempt.

15 These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

IMPROVEMENT.

HARDLY does the word of God afford a more instructive and comprehensive summary of the gospel, than that which is here before us. It gives us a view of the nature of the dispensation, as a *doctrine of grace;* and, at the same time, *a doctrine ac-*

[b] *The great God and our Saviour.*] The words τε μεγαλε Θεε και σωτηρος ἡμων, might with propriety be rendered, *our great God and Saviour*, though they are also susceptible of the other version. But it is certain, that if Christ be here called *our great God*, it is not in any view of *opposition* between *Him* and the *Father*. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27. Mr. Fleming, in support of this interpretation, observes (Flem. Christol. Vol. I. p. 203,) that we never read in scripture of the *Father's* appearance.

cording to godliness. It hath *appeared to all men*, and it *bring-* SECT.
eth them salvation, by inculcating the most salutary lessons IV.
that man can receive. It teaches us *to deny ungodliness and* Ver. 12
worldly lusts, how pressing soever their solicitations may be. It instructs us in all the branches of our *duty, to God, to ourselves*, and *to our fellow-Christians.* It guides us to uniform and complete goodness; not extolling any one part, to the neglect or injury of the rest, but tending to produce this beautiful birth, entire in all its members, and then to nourish it to its full maturity. As we are slow of heart to attend to such instructions, it enforces them with motives the most generous and the most animating. It represents to us, as it were in prophetic vision, *that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the* 13
great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; when he shall come with everlasting blessings in his hands, to reward all his faithful people; and with the terrors of Divine vengeance, to be poured forth upon all that have rejected the authority of his gospel. And, 14
that the most powerful considerations of gratitude may join with those of the highest interest, it directs our eyes to this Divine triumphant Saviour, as having once given himself to torture and death *for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people*, devoted to God, and *zealous of good works.* And surely, if this view cannot prevail upon us to consecrate ourselves to God, and to engage with vigour in his service, we must be utterly insensible, and worthy the severest punishment.

Let these lessons, therefore, every where be taught with all 15
authority. Let them be addressed at once to the meanest and the greatest of mankind; that they may join in a pious care, to 10
adorn the doctrine of such a Saviour and to secure their share in such a salvation.

SECT. IV.

The apostle concludes his epistle with exhorting Titus to recommend obedience to magistrates, and readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention; acknowledging the grace of God as that to which all Christians owe their hopes of salvation, and strongly pressing him to insist upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those idle controversies to which many were attached. He also instructs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and closes with giving him some directions about meeting him

at Nicopolis, and a general salutation to all his friends. Tit. III. 1. *to the end.*

TITUS III. 1.

SECT. IV. Titus III. 1.

AMONG other useful lessons, which it will be thy duty to give the Cretans, while thou continuest with them, *remind them of being subject to* those *principalities and powers* which God hath set in supreme authority over them, by no means excepting those who stand at the greatest distance from Christianity: exhort them also *to obey* subordinate *governors*; and upon the whole, *to be ready to every good work*, in every 2 relation which they sustain in life. Charge them *to calumniate no man*,[a] *not to be contentious*, [*but*] *gentle* in their whole demeanor, *shewing all meekness to all men*, even those from whom they may receive the greatest pro- 3 vocation. Let us not bear ourselves too highly on the superiority of our own characters, be they now ever so blameless, or ever so exemplary; *for we ourselves*[b] *also were formerly foolish*, as well as others, *disobedient* to the Divine authority, and perhaps to those whom God had invested with power over us; *wandering* from the paths both of truth and virtue, and *enslaved to various lusts and pleasures:* in the pursuit and gratification of which we degraded the nobler powers of our souls. We were *living in malice and envy, hateful* ourselves while under the tyranny of such fierce and detestable passions, [*and*] *hating one another*, on account of little clashings and oppositions in our temporal interests, while we forgot the great ties and bonds which ought to have endeared us to each other.

4 *But when the* admirable *kindness and love of God our Saviour*[c] *towards man*, so signally dis-

TITUS III. 1.

PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

[a] *Calumniate no man.*] Not even your Pagan, or Jewish neighbour, says good Dr. Barrow, (vol. I. p. 162.) however enormous in their lives, or cruel in their behaviour to you.

[b] *We ourselves.*] Dr. Whitby pleads, this cannot be applicable to Paul himself, and argues from Acts xxiii. 1; 2 Tim. i. 3; Phil. iii. 6. But I am persuaded that, when the apostle wrote this, he had such sublime views of the *purity* of God's law, and the *imperfection* of his own best obedience, how capable soever of being justified *to men*, that, notwithstanding all he says in the text quoted, he could apply what he here wrote, to much of *his own* character, while an enemy of Christianity. Compare note[c] below.

[c] *God our Saviour.*] It is observable, that *God the Father* is here called *our Sa-*

played in the gospel, *appeared* to us, we were delivered from this miserable condition: the remembrance therefore of this deliverance ought to make us compassionate, rather than severe, towards others in the same unhappy circumstance in which we once were; especially when we consider the manner in which it was accomplished. For it was *not by* any *works of righteousness which we* ourselves *had done*; for any acts of obedience, whether to ceremonial or moral precepts, by which we had made ourselves worthy of his favourable regard; *but according to his own mercy*, that *he saved us* from condemnation and ruin, *by the washing of regeneration*,[d] *and the renewing of the Holy Spirit*; which by its purifying influence operates at first to turn us to God, and bring us into the number of his children, and afterwards advances the happy work, by improving us more and more in the Divine life and image: Even by that Spirit *which he poured out upon us richly*[e] and abundantly, in his various gifts and graces, *by Jesus Christ our Saviour*, in virtue of whose intercession it has been imparted to the children of men; *That being justified by his grace, we might become heirs* of the most valuable blessings, *according to the hope of eternal life*, which, as the gift of that grace he hath exhibited to our believing views, as the great and noble object of our pursuit. [*This*,] which I have here

SECT. IV. Titus, III. 4.

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

8 *This is* a faithful

viour, to intimate, that it was his paternal love to us that engaged him to appoint *his Son* to redeem us, and to perform all those important offices for us, by which he accomplishes our salvation.

[d] *By the washing of regeneration.*] This hath often been explained of *baptism*, and Mr. Joseph Mede insists upon it, that it alludes to cleansing the new-born infant from the *pollutions* which necessarily attend it. (Ezek. xvi. 4—6.) But I cannot think this interpretation at all favourable to the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration*; since it is not by *washing* the *infant* that the *birth is produced*; and, therefore, it can surely signify no more, than that they who are *regenerated*, are to be thus *washed*. I have observed elsewhere, that λουτρον, the word here used, is by no means entirely synonymous to λουτρα, a laver. The sense here given of this much controverted passage is what I verily believe to be the justest and safest; though I am well aware, that the Christian church soon began to lay a disproportionable stress on *forms*, and to ascribe too great efficacy to the ritual of *baptism*. (See the preface and postscript to my Sermons on Regeneration, second edition.)

[e] *Which he poured out upon us richly.*] These words have been explained as referring to Paul alone, and the effusion of the Spirit upon *him*, to qualify him for his extraordinary office. But, to say nothing of the harshness of this interpretation, and the violence it must do to several phrases here used, it is evident, that it would make the text quite foreign to the purpose for which it is introduced, viz. of dissuading from severe and uncharitable censures.

SECT. IV. Titus III. 8.

been attesting [*is*] *a faithful saying*, most credible in itself, as well as of great weight and importance; *and concerning these things*, these distinguishing principles of the gospel, *I will* and charge, *that thou* steadily *affirm* and *constantly* inculcate them; *that* so *they who have believed in God*, and by baptism professed to embrace this gospel, may not imagine, that by the dispensation of grace they are excused from the observation of duty; but, on the contrary, that being thus engaged, and encouraged by such grace and hope, they *may be* so much the more *careful*, thoughtful, and diligent *to signalize themselves* as examples of the greatest zeal *in good works*. *These things are good and profitable to men*: there is a beauty and advantage in them which nothing can equal. Let these therefore be the darling topics of thy preaching, as thou desirest the edification and salvation of thy hearers.

saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.

9 *But avoid*, and endeavour to guard others against *foolish questions*, which the Judaizing teachers are ready to start, that tend only to amuse an idle curiosity; *and* those perplexed *genealogies*,[f] about which they so eagerly debate, *and* other *strifes and contentions about the law* of Moses; *for they are unprofitable and vain*, not only consuming to no purpose, that time which is capable of much better improvement, but also tending to discompose the mind, to alienate the affections of Christians from each other, and to render them indifferent to the proper duties of life. And *a man that*, on this occasion, or any other, *is a* factious and obstinate *heretic*,[g] that introduces such controversies

9 But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 A man that is an heretic, after the

[f] Perplexed *genealogies*.] It is well known, that the Jews carried their fondness for these to a great excess; and Jerome tells us, they were as well acquainted with those from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their own names.

[g] *Heretic*.] After all the tedious controversies which have arisen about the sense of this text, I have been obliged to acquiesce in that given in the paraphrase, being well assured, that, a person may be said to be *self-condemned* if he furnish *matter of conviction* against himself. Compare Heb. xi. 7; Mat. xii. 41, 42; Acts xiii. 46; Job xv. 6; Luke xix. 22. And, indeed, if Dr. Whitby's interpretation borrowed and defended by Dr. Foster, is to be admitted, viz. that he is a heretic who teaches directly *contrary* to what he inwardly *believes*, the *truth* or *falsehood* of his notions will be a matter quite *indifferent* as to fixing this censure upon him; and a man, who was really an atheist, might be subject to *condemnation*, as a heretic for teaching the most *orthodox* system of Christianity that can be conceived, if his secret atheism should by any means be discovered. And so the word

SECT. IV. Titus III. 10.

first and second admonition, reject:

as these into the church, and perversely maintains and propagates them, in a manner injurious to the peace of society, *after the first and second admonition* from thee and the church, given with proper solemnity, *reject*, and declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as a member of it.

11 Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

11 *Knowing that such a one*, who is so fond of his own darling notions, that he will ruin the peace of the church for them, and will not submit to thy remonstrances, and those of the wiser and better part of the society, *is perverted* by some very ill principles, whatever zeal he may pretend for what he maintains as truth; *and* that he not only errs, but *sins* too, in such obstinate efforts to diffuse his errors, *being* indeed *self-condemned*, and judged out of his own mouth, as his own words furnish sufficient matter of conviction; and, while he makes such a breach in the church, he in effect passes on himself that sentence of separation from it which he well deserves to lie under till he returns to a better temper.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis; for I have determined there to winter.

12 *When I shall send to thee Artemas, or Tychicus*, to supply thy place in Crete, as I hope quickly to do, *endeavour to come to me at Nicopolis; for there I have determined to pass the winter*,[h] if Providence gives me an opportunity.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and A-

13 As *Zenas, the* worthy *lawyer*, who, though well versed in those studies, on which some of his Jewish brethren value themselves so highly, is now a sincere and active Christian, *and* my eloquent and pious friend *Apollos*, will be with

heresy will be made to signify a kind of *solemn lying*; which is such an abuse of speech as I suppose few will be capable of admitting. I shall only add, that, as Dr. Foster is obliged to allow there are fundamental errors, for which, how sincerely soever received and maintained, a man ought to be separated from a Christian society, the dispute between this learned gentleman and his antagonist was brought to this question, what St. Paul calls *heresy*? and the hints laid down above, convince me, that what Dr. Whitby has said on this head, cannot be defended, even by this ingenious reviver of it.

[h] *There I have determined to pass the winter.*]. Several cities of this name are mentioned in antiquity; one, not far from Philippi, in Macedonia; another in Epirus, which took its rise and name from the victory of Augustus over Anthony and Cleopatra at Actium. Mr L'Enfant is of opinion this last is referred to here, supposing that Paul intended a visit to those in or near Illyricum, among whom he had preached the gospel; Rom. xv. 19. But Mr. Cradock, and many others, think it was the former. After all, it seems to me something uncertain; as well as the particular time when this epistle was written, and the place from whence it was sent. (See Introd. to this epistle, p. 462.)

SECT. IV.

thee when this comes to thy hand, or quickly afterwards. I desire thou wouldst *bring* them *forward on their journey* to me, *with* readiness and *diligence;* and take all the care thou canst, *that nothing* convenient *may be wanting to them* which thou canst supply them with. I hope these good men will meet with that hospitable treatment, among the Christians in your parts, which their character deserves; *and let* all *those that belong to us*, and call themselves Christian brethren, whether they were before Jews or Gentiles, *learn to distinguish themselves in good works, for necessary purposes* of aid and service to others; *that they may not be unfruitful*, and act as if they had learned nothing but barren speculations from that religion which is so well calculated to inspire and animate every sentiment of benevolence and generosity.

pollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

Titus III. 13.

14

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

15 *All* the Christians *that are* here *with me, salute thee*, in an affectionate and respectful manner. *Salute them who love us in the* bonds of our common *faith;* and assure my Christian friends, that I feel an equal affection for them. *Grace* and peace, and every other blessing, from our Father and Saviour [*be*] *with you all. Amen.*

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the remembrance of the irregularities with which we ourselves were once chargeable, of that sinful and miserable con-
Verse 2 dition in which we once were, make us candid to others, and silence our too severe censures against them. And let us rather, with the apostle, humbly adore that grace which has now made
3 a difference between us and those that are still foolish and disobedient, wandering in the paths of vice, and enslaved to divers
4 lusts and passions. Let the *kindness*, the *philanthropy of God*,
5 be daily celebrated and adored by us; *of God, who hath saved us, not by the righteousness of our works*, but by *his own rich* and
7 overflowing *mercy; hath justified us by his* free grace, in *Christ*, and thereby *made us heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* Nor let us ever forget how much we are indebted to the *rege-*
6 *nerating and renewing influences of the Holy Ghost shed abroad upon us richly by Jesus Christ our Saviour.* May it wash and purify our souls more and more from every stain of sin, and may
14 it inspire us with a pious ardour to honour our profession, by distinguishing ourselves in all good works for necessary uses, and

according to the calls which Providence gives us in life. Having professed our belief in God, let us carefully practise all the virtues of the Christian character; for these things are indeed good and profitable to men. But let us guard against those airy curiosities and abstruse speculations, which, on the contrary, are unprofitable and vain. SECT. IV. Ver. 8

May all the churches of Christ be delivered from such factious members and teachers as would depart from the infallible rule of truth which is laid down in the word of God, and would subvert the faith once delivered to the saints; introducing instead of it, the doctrines of men, and teaching things which tend to alienate the minds of Christians from the gospel, and from each other, that they may set up their own authority, and promote their own secular interest. We ought undoubtedly to be cautious how we pass such a censure on particular persons, without clear and evident proofs; but when such proofs arise, and the persons in question appear to be the turbulent and pernicious heretics that St. Paul describes, it were to be wished they might always meet with the treatment which he recommends. They ought first to be plainly and seriously admonished; and, if repeated admonitions are rejected, it is the duty of the wiser and sounder parts of Christian societies to expel them; that they may be less capable of doing mischief, and that the gangrene of such pernicious principles and dispositions may not spread, to the disgrace and ruin of the churches to which they belong. But let it ever be remembered, that this is all the remedy which scripture furnishes us with; and they who, to the solemn censure of disturbed and injured churches, add any corporal severities, or civil penalties whatsoever, are taking up weapons which Christ has never put into their hands, and may very probably do more mischief in the church and the world, than the most erroneous of those against whom they would arm their terrors.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

PHILEMON;

WITH CRITICAL NOTES,

AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was an inhabitant of Colosse, as we may conclude from St. Paul's mentioning Onesimus, in his epistle to the Colossians, as one of them, (chap. iv. 9;) as well as from his saluting Archippus in this epistle (ver. 2,) who appears, from Col. iv. 17, to have been a pastor of that church. The title of fellow-labourer, given Philemon, (ver. 1,) makes it probable, that he was his colleague in the ministry: and, though we cannot certainly determine when he first embraced Christianity, it is evident, from the oblique insinuation in the 19th verse, that he was one of the apostle's converts; and it is not at all unlikely, (as some have conjectured) that he might have had an opportunity of attending upon him during his long residence at Ephesus, where we are told St. Paul preached with so much success, that *all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ:* (Acts xix. 10.)—He seems, from several hints given in the epistle, to have been a person of distinction; particularly from the mention made of the church in his house, (ver. 2,) and his liberal contribution to the relief of the saints, (ver. 5, 7:) and the general strain of the letter shews, that the apostle held him in very high esteem, and looked upon him as one of the great supports of religion in that society.

It appears from the first verse of this epistle, that St. Paul was under confinement when he wrote it; and, as he expresses (ver. 22,) his expectation of being shortly released, it is probable that it was written towards the close of his first imprisonment at Rome, and sent, together with the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus, about the year of our Lord 63, or the ninth of the emperor Nero. (Compare Introduction to Ephes. p. 89, and Vol. III. § 60, note g.)

The occasion of the letter was this:—Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed his master, and fled to Rome; where, happily for him, he met with the apostle, who was at that time a prisoner at large, and by his instructions and admonitions was converted to Christianity, and reclaimed to a sense of his duty. St. Paul seems to have kept him for some considerable time under his eye, that he might be satisfied of the reality of the change; and, when he had made a sufficient trial of him, and found that his behaviour was entirely agreeable to his profession, he would not detain him any longer for his own private convenience, though in a situation that rendered such an assistant peculiarly desirable, (compare ver. 13, 14,) but sent him back to his master; and, as a mark of his esteem, entrusted him, together with Tychicus, with the charge of delivering his epistle to the church at Colosse, and giving them a particular account of the state of things at Rome, recommending him to them, at the same time, as *a faithful and beloved brother;* (Col. iv, 9.)—And, as Philemon might well be supposed to be strongly prejudiced against one who had left his service in so infamous a manner, he sends him this letter, in which he employs all his influence to remove his suspicions, and reconcile him to the thoughts of taking Onesimus into his family again. And whereas St. Paul might have exerted that authority which his character as an apostle, and the relation in which he stood to Philemon as a spiritual father, would naturally give him, he chooses to entreat him as a friend, and with the softest and most insinuating address urges his suit, conjuring him, by all the

ties of Christian friendship, that he would not deny him his request. And, the more effectually to prevail upon him, he represents his own peace and happiness as deeply interested in the event: and speaks of Onesimus in such terms, as were best adapted to soften his prejudices, and dispose him to receive one who was so dear to himself, not merely as a servant, but as a fellow-Christian and a friend.

But though the apostle's subject did not lead him to treat so directly of the doctrines or precepts of Christianity in this as in his other epistles, yet a person, whose mind like his, was so deeply and habitually impressed with a sense of Divine truths, could not fail, even when writing upon the most common and familiar occurrences, to introduce some hints that might tend to cherish pious and virtuous sentiments in the breast of his friend; and accordingly, in this short epistle, we meet with several allusions to different parts of the Christian plan, interwoven in so easy and natural a manner with the rest of the letter, as must convince us how near those subjects lay to his heart.

It is impossible to read over this admirable epistle, without being touched with the delicacy of sentiment, and the masterly address that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent true politeness is, not only with all the warmth and sincerity of the friend, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the apostle. And if this letter were to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed a masterpiece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written upon a similar occasion; (lib. ix. let. 21.) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to excel in the epistolary style, and though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged, by every impartial reader, vastly inferior to this animated composition of the apostle.

One cannot but be solicitous to know what effect such an epistle produced. One would willingly hope, it was attended with all the success which St. Paul

seemed to expect, when he tells Philemon, that he wrote to him in full *confidence of his obedience, knowing that he would do even more than he said.* And though nothing indeed is expressly asserted in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, from the nature of the thing, that Onesimus had already waited upon his master, and been received into favour, when he discharged the commission, with which (as we have observed) he was honoured, to the Colossians. For it is hardly to be imagined, that the apostle would direct him to join with Tychicus, in delivering such a message to a church, that was in part under the care of Philemon, before he had made his submission to him, and obtained his pardon. (Compare the Introduction to the Ephesians, p. 89.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO PHILEMON.

SECT. I.

Paul intending to intercede with Philemon, in favour of his fugitive servant Onesimus, introduces his design with a most affectionate and proper salutation. Philem. ver. 1—7.

PHILEMON 1.

PAUL, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer,

PHILEMON. 1.

SECT. I.

PAUL, a well-known *prisoner* in the cause *of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, a brother*, not unknown, join their salutations *to Philemon our beloved* friend, *and* pious *fellow-labourer* in the work and gospel of our blessed Redeemer, and one of the pastors of the Colossian church: *And* we also address them *to the beloved Apphia*, [a] his pious consort, *and to* his associate in the ministry, *Archippus* (Col. iv. 17,) *our fellow-soldier* in that holy warfare in which we are engaged; *and to the* little *church* of Christians

Phil. 1

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house;

2

[a] *To the beloved Apphia.*] It has been observed, that this lady and Archippus are probably named in a view of engaging their good offices with Philemon in favour of Onesimus; and no doubt Paul would wish they might be engaged: but, separate from that view, it would have been natural and decent to mention them both.

SECT. 1. Phil. 2

[*that is*] *in thine house*, as we know thou art so happy as to have several of thy numerous family united to thee, and to us, in the bonds of the 3 Lord. May *grace and peace*, that abundance of spiritual blessings, and that happiness resulting from them, which we so often wish to our Christian friends, when we are addressing them by letter, [*be*] *unto you from God our* gracious and bountiful *Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, to whose intercession we owe our interest in the Divine favour.

3 Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 You may be sure, my dear Philemon, that though absent from you, and surrounded with many cares and sorrows, yet far from being unmindful of you in my addresses to the throne of grace, I *always thank my God* on your account, when I am *making mention of thee in my prayers*; 5 *Hearing*, with greater pleasure than I can express, *of the* steady *faith which thou hast*, and always maintainest, *towards the Lord Jesus* Christ, as the great object to which our faith as Christians is directed, *and of thy* ardent *love to all the saints*[b], who are the excellent of the earth, and the most deserving our esteem and 6 affection. It is therefore matter of my most fervent prayer, that these promising openings may be abundantly answered; and, *that thy communion* with us *in the faith* of our blessed Redeemer, the advantages of which thou doest now so happily share, *may be* more and more apparently *efficacious in* extorting from all that behold it, *the* due *acknowledgment of every good* and valuable *thing which is in you* all *towards Christ Jesus*, and all those whom he is pleased 7 to own and favour. Permit me to say this, in my own name, and that of my companion Timothy; *for we are* ourselves *greatly rejoiced and comforted by thy love*, which thou art in so many generous ways expressing to our fellow-Christians; and particularly, *that the bowels of the* poor *saints are refreshed by thee* our dear

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers;

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

[b] *Of the faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to all the saints.*] The words in the original stand as they are placed in our version; and many instances of such a transposition are produced by Dr. Whitby, in his learned note on this place; but Mr. Blackwall justly observes, that our language does not admit of the like, and therefore proposes the rendering we have followed. Blackwall's Sac. Class. Vol. I. p. 87.

brother, while thou feedest and relievest the poor, and makest those possessions which Providence hath given thee, a general good. None of the hungry that are fed at thy table can find a supply of their necessities more sensible and delightful, than the joy we feel from the report of so beneficent a conduct, in one whom we so tenderly regard. SECT. I. Phil. 7.

IMPROVEMENT.

If any could be so weak as to think the character of the Christian and the minister at all inconsistent with that of the well-bred man, they must see a remarkable demonstration to the contrary in this familiar epistle of St. Paul to his friend Philemon; which is conducted with the happiest address, and which, in true politeness, may vie with that of the greatest masters of the epistolary style in antiquity. The Introduction, (the length of which obliges us to separate it from the remainder to which it is so happily connected,) leads us naturally to a variety of useful remarks, and conveys important instruction in the vehicle of well-deserved praise. How elevated soever the station of Philemon might be, and how plentiful soever his circumstances, it Verse 5. was his chief glory and felicity to be so distinguished for *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and *love to all the saints*. And indeed it is most unworthy the profession we make of faith in Christ, as the great Head of the church, not to love all his members: unworthy our character of saints, not to feel a sympathetic affection for all that are sanctified. If others are deficient here, as, alas! many are too sadly deficient, let us exert 6 ourselves so much the more, and labour to give the most substantial demonstrations of our love. It will be an honour to us, and to the Christian name, that our communion in this precious faith should extort an acknowledgment of good things in us, from all who are intimately acquainted and conversant with us. Thus shall we diffuse happiness in a wide circle: for it is a sincere joy to all good men, to behold the graces and the usefulness of others. Especially are the hearts of faithful and zea- 7 lous ministers comforted, when the bowels of poor saints are refreshed by the liberality of the rich. They share alternately the pleasure which is felt on the side of the pious benefactors and their grateful beneficiaries; and were they, with Paul, in the confinement and necessities of a prison, the report would delight and enlarge their souls.

SECT. II.

The apostle proceeds to the main business of this short epistle; and labours, by the happiest address that can be imagined, to engage Philemon kindly to receive and forgive Onesimus, his fugitive slave, who after having greatly injured his master, had happily been converted by St. Paul at Rome. He concludes with some particular salutations and messages. Philem. ver. 8, *to the end.*

PHILEMON 8.

SECT. II. Phil. 8. I HAVE been expressing, my dear Philemon, the confidence I have in your excellent character, and the great pleasure with which both I and Timothy, my brother, have heard of your many generous and beneficent actions; and *therefore*, in reference to the particular occasion of this letter, which to so good a heart cannot be disagreeable, *though I might take great freedom, in* virtue of my relation to *Christ*, and the authority he has given me *to* prescribe, and *enjoin that which* it [*is*] *proper* and reasonable *for thee* to do, *I rather* choose *by love* to *entreat* [*thee,*] *being such an one as Paul the aged;*[a] whose superior standing in life and in religion I know thou wouldst revere, though in a private station, *and* especially as I am *now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ*, whom thou wouldst, I am sure, honour, as a confessor in his cause, if I were not distinguished by so immediate a commission from him, or so long a train of services in his church. *I entreat thee*, I say, *concerning a* certain *son of mine, whom I have begotten* to Christ *in my bonds;*[b]

PHILEM. 8. WHEREFORE, though I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient;

9 Yet for love's sake, I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

[a] *Paul the aged.*] It is generally agreed, that this epistle was written about the year of Christ 63; and, if we suppose Paul to have been 24 years old when Stephen was stoned, (which is consistent with his being called a young man) that being about the year 34, (for we have not *data* sufficient absolutely to determine the exact time,) he would now be 53; and, considering how much his constitution would probably be impaired, by his fatigues and sufferings, before that time, he might properly enough call himself πρεσβύτης, *one advanced in age*, though not an old man. Dr. Whitby indeed says, we are *young* till 40, and not properly *aged* till after 60, and concludes he might be about 34 at the death of Stephen, and 63 at the date of this epistle. If the reader be not satisfied with either of these conjectures, he may take any medium between them that shall appear to him the more plausible.

[b] *A son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds—Onesimus.*] Thus the words stand in the original; and I thought it

and whom I hope thou wilt upon that account be inclined to favour, knowing how dear he must be to me, considered as a soul which God hath given me at such a season as this. And it is no other than thy servant *Onesimus; Who* indeed, if I may so allude to his name, did not formerly answer to it, for he *was once unprofitable to thee*, negligent of thy business, and so conscious of having deserved thy displeasure, that he fled from it. *But* he *now* is, and I trust will be, *profitable* both *to thee and to me*,[c] so as daily to give increasing satisfaction to us both: *Whom*, how agreeable and useful soever he might have been to me here, *I have sent* back to thee *again: Do thou therefore receive* him with readiness and affection. Receive *him*, did I say? nay rather receive, *as it were my own bowels*: a person whom I so tenderly love, that he may seem, as it were, to carry the heart of Paul along with him whithersoever he goes. *Whom* indeed *I was desirous to have kept near me, that he might* have officiated for thee, and *in thy stead have attended upon me in the bonds* I suffer for the sake *of the gospel:* for I do thee, O Philemon, the justice to believe, thou wouldest have found a pious pleasure, in every ministration of this kind, if thou wert near me. *But I would do nothing* in this affair *without thy* express *consent, that thy benefit might not seem to be* extorted *by necessity, but* appear a *voluntary* act. I therefore return him to thee by the first opportunity; *for perhaps he was separated from thee for a while*, by the permission of Providence, *to this* very *end, that thou mightest* receive and *enjoy him for ever*; that he might not only be dear and use-

SECT. II.

Phil. 10

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

11 12 13 14 15

incumbent upon me to preserve that order, because it keeps the mind in an agreeable suspense, and has a fine effect, which every reader of taste will quickly perceive.

[c] *Was unprofitable, but now is profitable.*] It has been justly observed, that it was strange, Onesimus, who had been so wicked, in the pious family of Philemon, amidst all the religious opportunities he enjoyed there, should meet with conversion in his rambles at Rome. Instances have often happened somewhat of a similar nature; but it is very unjustifiable, and may probably be fatal, for any to presume on the like extraordinary interpositions of Providence and grace in their favour.—The word *Onesimus*, is pretty generally known to signify *profit*, and *Onesiphorus* is much of the same import. They were names which might perhaps be given to slaves by way of good omen, expressing an expectation that they would bring advantage to their masters; and it is very evident, that Paul refers to the etymology of the word.

SECT. II.

Phil. 14

ful to thee, during all the remainder of his life, as a servant, whose ear is, as it were, bored to the the door of thine house, (to allude to the Hebrew custom, Exod. xxi. 6.) but that he might indeed be a source of eternal delight to thee, in that infinitely better world, where all distinctions between masters and their slaves shall cease, even that world of complete liberty and everlasting friendship.

16 In the mean time, receive him, *not now as a fugitive slave*, to be long frowned upon, and kept at a distance, for his former faults; nor treat him merely as a common *servant*, *but* as *above a servant*, as standing in another, a much more dear and honourable relation, *a beloved brother, especially to me*, as having been for some time a very useful attendant upon me in my afflictions; *but how much more so to thee*, to whom he belongs *both in the flesh and in the Lord*, as thou hast so long known him, and wilt have the pleasure of discerning more particularly how happy a change Christianity hath made in his temper and character. *If therefore thou esteemest me* as a friend and *a companion*[1] in Christ, I beseech thee to *receive him*, even *as* thou wouldest receive *myself*, if I could have the satisfaction of making thee a visit in person.

18 *If he have injured thee in any* pecuniary *matter, or is indebted* [*to thee,*] in consequence of any former extravagancies and follies (of which divine grace hath now, I hope, made him truly sensible,) so far as it has been the case, *charge it to my account.*

19 *I Paul have written* [*it*] *with my own hand*, and do hereby, as it were, give thee legal security for it; *I will pay it again* upon demand, as far as my little substance will go. *Not to say to thee that*, as I was the happy instrument of thy conversion to Christ, *thou owest even thine ownself unto me.* We will put that quite out of the question, and if thou pleasest

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

[1] *Esteemest me a companion,*] L'Enfant translates it, "I conjure thee therefore, by all that is common between us, receive him as myself," in imitation of Theodoret, who was no doubt an excellent commentator. But the main thought which prevailed in the Apostle's mind, seems to have been the participation they both had in the blessings of the gospel, which was the dearest bond of their friendship.

to require it, I will really charge myself as thy debtor, and take the first opportunity of making thee a remittance. *Yes* [*my*] dear *brother*, let me prevail upon thee in this request, *let me have joy of thee in the Lord;* and, while thou art so ready to do good to others, and to communicate for their comfort, out of those stores which Providence has so graciously given thee, let me beseech thee to *refresh my bowels*[e] *in the Lord;* for the Christian consolation, which it will afford me, to see thee and Onesimus happy in each other, will be better, and more delightful, than food to the hungry.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

Phil. 20

But I will not urge the matter further; *I have written to thee, in* full *confidence of thy* ready *obedience* and deference to my request, and indeed, as *knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say;* thou wilt not think of insisting upon the exact balance of former accounts, but wilt readily embrace this thy returning servant in the arms of paternal love. At the same time, I must *also* desire thee to *prepare a lodging for me,*[f] *for*, though I am as yet a prisoner, *I hope that I shall*, ere long, *through your prayers, be granted to you;* and, if Providence set me at liberty again, I intend to visit your parts, and shall, if it be convenient, cast myself on the known hospitality of your family. In the mean while, accept the greeting of our Christian brethren here at Rome, and let me particularly tell thee, that *Epaphras, my fellow-captive in Christ Jesus, salutes thee;* As [*also*] *Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas*, and *Luke, my fellow-labourers*, who are cordially engaged with me in the service of the gospel, and take a peculiar pleasure in lending that assistance to the churches in Rome which my confinement will not conveniently admit me to impart. I con-

21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus.

24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

25 The grace of

[e] *Refresh my bowels.*] The word ἀναπαυσον is wonderfully emphatical. It literally signifies to *appease*, or *quiet;* which strongly intimates the commotion he felt, through the ardour of his concern for Onesimus; and seems to represent the eagerness of his desire for his re-establishment in Philemon's family, by the appetite of *hunger*. Incapable, as in many other places, of expressing this in the version, I have attempted it, though by no means with equal spirit, in the paraphrase. Compare ver. 7, where the same word is used, and seems to be referred to here with peculiar beauty and propriety.

[f] *Prepare a lodging for me.*] Theodoret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add greater weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus.

SECT. 11. clude with the best wish which the most endearing Christian friendship can form: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* ever [*be*] *with your spirit*, and shed abroad on thee, and all thy companions in him, that peace and happiness which nothing but the communication of his favour can give. *Amen.*

Phil. 25 our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

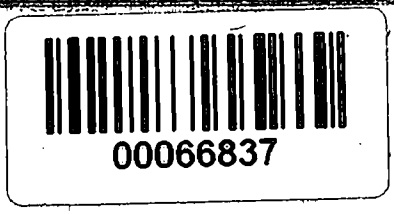
IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the condescension of the holy apostle! how charming and delicate his address in this whole section! which makes the immediate occasion of this letter, minute as it may seem, matter of congratulation to the Christian world. St. Paul lays aside the authority, which his office, his age, his sufferings, gave him, to address Philemon, as on a foot of equal friendship, choosing rather by love to entreat. Let the example be imitated by those in superior stations and relations of life; and let them learn likewise, from the tenderness which such a man expresses about this poor slave, in whom he traced the appearance of a truly Christian temper, to interest themselves in the happiness of those whose rank is far beneath their own; and learn to make the situation of their servants easy, by a kind and friendly treatment. Well may such a care be expected, especially when we can look on such as brethren beloved in the Lord, and partakers with us in the same Saviour and hope.

Let those, to whom God hath blessed the labours of his faithful ministers, as the means of their conversion, remember it with pleasure, and ascribe it to the riches of Divine grace, to which all is originally to be traced; remembering also, that there is a sense in which they owe even themselves to those who have been honoured as the instruments of bringing them to Christ, without an acquaintance with whom they had lost themselves, and been ruined for ever. Let the kindness which Paul expresses for Onesimus, in being willing that his debt to Philemon should be charged to his account, lead us to reflect on our infinite obligations to a gracious Redeemer. He has suffered our ten thousand talents to be imputed to him, that his righteousness might be so imputed to us, that, for the sake of it, we should finally be readmitted to the family of God. With an ingratitude not to be paralleled, by any thing which can pass between mortal men, we had perfidiously deserted it; but the Divine goodness leaves us room humbly to hope, we may have *departed from it for a while, to be received into it for ever. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit*, to produce those strong impressions of wonder, thankfulness, and love, which ought to fill it in every remembrance of such overflowing and triumphant mercy! *Amen.*

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by J. & C. Muirhead.


00066837

227.1
Bib/Fam
66837
(Vol. V)

Bible - N.T.
family expositor
by Philip Doddridge, in six
ls., 1811.

DIGITIZED
2015. 01 SEP 2015

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016